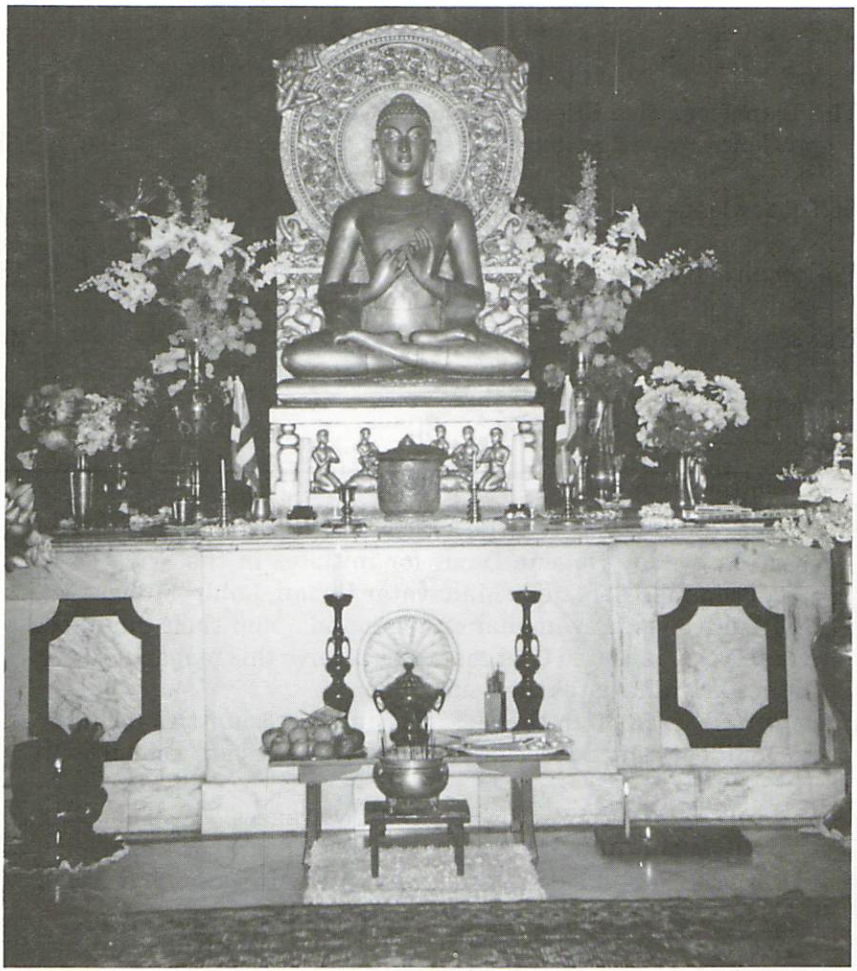
Radiance

A Quarterly Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

July – September 2000



An Enlivening Power is Nurturing the Universe and We Can Learn to Cooperate With It

You have a right to actions only, not to their results. Let not the results of actions be your motive, neither let there be attachment to inaction. Firmly established in Self-realization, perform your allotted duties, even-minded in both success and failure, for, truly, mental poise is yoga.

– *Bhagavad Gita 2:47,48*

When one is established in superconsciousness, meditation is natural and spontaneous. Then, even when not meditating, the benefits are enjoyed.

– *Lahiri Mahasaya*

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Unless otherwise noted, the articles in *Radiance* magazine are written by Roy Eugene Davis for initiates in the kriya yoga tradition represented by Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, and their qualified successors. Initiated CSA members receive this magazine free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe.

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Though I have assumed
Myriad forms in the past,
No more forms will I take on now,
The wires*, the strings* and even
The instrument* is frayed,
And I am under the sway
Of the Lord's name.
Now I will not dance
To the beat of the drum—
The drum my mind played so long,
But plays no more.
Lust, anger and the world's lure
I have reduced to ashes,
The pitcher of avarice is shattered,
The gown of cravings has become old
And I am freed from the chains of delusion.
I recognize the One within all beings,
All discussions are at an end for me.
Through the grace of God
I have found the Perfect One.

– Kabir (14th century)

*W*ires*; futile desires and cravings; *strings*, misguided hopes and expectations; *instrument*, the conditioned mind—all of which are *frayed*, weakened and overcome by disciplined spiritual practice and illumination of consciousness.

Word Meanings to Know

choice To choose or select. The freedom to do so.

concentrate To draw toward a common center. To gather together in a single main body or power. Focus.

effect To make or accomplish. The way in which something acts on or influences something. The capacity or power to achieve a desired result.

God The single reality of which souls are individualized units.

guru *Gu*, heaviness, darkness; *ru*, the remover of heaviness and darkness (clouded awareness and lack of higher knowledge). A teacher. A satguru (*sat*, reality, isness, essence of being) is a "truth revealing" teacher.

kriya An action, intentional or spontaneous, that causes, makes, or allows something to happen.

radical Latin *radicalis*, having roots. Arriving from or going to a source. Favoring or resulting in extreme change. Basic.

Self-realization Conscious Self-knowledge, the result of a radical shift or change at the core of one's being. The restoration of consciousness (awareness) to the natural, transcendent state.

spiritual practice An action, procedure, or method used to remove mental and physical obstacles which prevent the unfoldment and free expression of innate soul qualities and abilities.

transform To change the nature, function, or condition.

yoga To join or unify. Attentive, knowledge-based yoga practice clarifies awareness and results in Self- and God-realization.

The Transformative Effects of Radical Choices and Concentrated Spiritual Practice

The kriya yoga path is primarily for sincere devotees of God who are committed to constructive, selfless living and concentrated spiritual practice that will result in Self- and God-realization and permanent liberation of consciousness. Insincere persons can, of course, benefit in accord with their aspirations and actions.

When Paramahansa Yogananda lectured and taught classes for several years in the major cities of America during the second decade of the last century, he also initiated students into kriya yoga meditation practices. It has been estimated that, during his lifetime, he initiated more than one hundred thousand people, most of whom neglected their spiritual practices after a short lapse of time.

Referring to those early years, Paramahansaji said, "I was sowing [spiritual] seeds in the soil of the subconscious minds of the people who came to hear me speak. I knew then that only a few individuals would remain faithful to their practices." He also said that some disciples who did persist on this path experienced exceptional spiritual growth.

During the past forty-five years I have initiated more than five thousand people. Approximately ten percent of them have remained in contact with me. Where are the others, and what are they doing? A few have died. Some are involved with various metaphysical, yoga, or "new age" studies and practices. Most of them are living ordinary, self-centered lives—preoccupied with their jobs, secular interests, family members and friends, and endeavors to satisfy their material, physical, and emotional needs.

I provide accurate information about the real purpose of human life and how to awaken to Self- and God-realization, and pray for the welfare of everyone. It is the personal responsibility of sincere truth seekers to improve their understanding, make wise choices, and do whatever else is necessary to awaken to their full potential and be

receptive and responsive to God's grace.

Some reasons why kriya initiates do not experience satisfying spiritual growth, waver in their resolve, or stray from the path are:

- They were insincere when initiated, or only curious.
- Lack of preparation: not understanding the philosophical basis of kriya yoga practices or having practiced the basic meditation procedures and routines before asking to be initiated.
- Inability to comprehend the teachings.
- Insufficient commitment to practice what is learned.
- Confusion and lack of focus because of indiscriminate mixing (adulteration) of metaphysical studies, lifestyle regimens, and meditation practices with incompatible ideas and practices.
- Disinterest.
- Egotism dramatized by arrogance, a rigid, self-righteous mental attitude maintained in an attempt to justify erroneous opinions or self-centered behaviors.
- Mental and/or emotional instability.
- Being overwhelmed by or preoccupied with problems, transitory events, unnecessary obligations, or social relationships which are of little or no value.
- Emotional immaturity: unable or unwilling to be responsible for mental and emotional states, choices, actions, or circumstances.
- Choosing to remain "ordinary" to sustain emotionally satisfying relationships and fulfill the expectations of others who do not aspire to be Self-realized and liberated.

When opposite conditions prevail, innate soul qualities unfold rapidly. Resolve to be fully awake in God is constant. Attention and actions remain focused on meaningful (of real value) purposes.

The choices we make determine our experiences. The results of irrational, unclearly defined, emotion-based choices are never satisfying. Radical (knowledge-based and supported by universal, impersonal laws of causation) choices are transformative. When mental attitudes, thoughts, moods, behaviors, relationships, actions, and circumstances

which enhance our lives and the lives of others and keep us attuned to the nurturing influences of the one field of Consciousness that empower evolutionary processes, are chosen, living is almost effortless and spiritual growth is spontaneous.

Appropriately chosen, concentrated spiritual practices quickly remove physical and mental obstacles to our innate urge to have our awareness restored to wholeness. Spiritual practices are appropriate when they are compatible with our psychological temperament and our needs. Some devotees are inclined to be devotional, others are inclined toward the intellectual (discernment) approach to Self- and God-knowledge, to meditative contemplation, or to a life of selfless service. A balanced, integrated mode of spiritual practice is best.

- Nurture devotion to God until your awareness is so merged in God that no perception of "otherness" remains.
- Use your powers of discriminative intelligence to accurately discern the difference between your pure-conscious nature and ordinary states of awareness, to have insight into the reality of God, and to make knowledgeable choices.
- Meditate every day until your thoughts and feelings are calm and you are established in transcendent superconsciousness.
- Live effectively, yet selflessly. Be inwardly calm at all times. Be curious; continue to learn. Efficiently fulfill wholesome desires and accomplish worthwhile purposes.

These guidelines are for everyone who sincerely aspires to total well-being and liberation of consciousness.

Paramahansa Yogananda often advised disciples: "While you are swimming, you can help others learn to swim." (While you are engaged in right living and spiritual practice, to the extent that it is possible, assist others to do likewise.)

Wisdom For The Ages

When the waves [changes] of awareness are transcended by meditation practice, consciousness is purified and oneness with the Supreme Self is realized. The phenomenal world, the truth seeker's awareness, and Supreme Consciousness are experienced as one. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

The mind is the connecting link between the soul and the senses. Divine perceptions are acquired when the senses are spiritualized. Joy, sweetness, and exaltation fill the entire being when the sense faculties are purified and inspired by the purity of the soul. The body is the holy temple. God as the indwelling soul is the deity. One who is enlightened knows this truth.
– *Lahiri Mahasaya*

Only a few [individuals] can rise above the influences of their professed creeds and find absolute unanimity in the truths propounded by all great faiths. People who are wholly engrossed in mundane concerns are in need of help and guidance. All creatures ... are eager to realize [eternal] existence, consciousness, and bliss. – *Sri Yukteswar*

When rested by [kriya] pranayama practice, the nervous system is refreshed.. If one daily rests the nervous system in this way, the physical body is vitalized. Life and death come under the control of the yogi who perseveres in the practice of [kriya] pranayama. – *Sri Yukteswar*

God's will [evolutionary inclinations] will be accomplished whether you choose to participate with it or not—but when you do participate with it, your spiritual growth is quickened.
– *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Self-Knowledge and Soul Liberation

The following article is a prose paraphrase of a portion of *Yoga-Vashishta Ramayana*, a Sanskrit poetic work (circa tenth century) of approximately thirty thousand verses. Attributed to Valmiki, the composer of the epic Ramayana, it is presented as a dialogue between Prince Rama and his teacher Vashishta. Here, only the words of the teacher are used.

There are two categories of liberation [when soul awareness is devoid of illusions and is no longer adversely influenced by mental processes]. One: when mental conditionings remain influential. Two: when mental conditionings are no longer influential. The former exists when the enlightened soul is still embodied; the latter prevails after the enlightened soul departs the body. The uncontrolled influences of the mind are troublesome; the pacification of mental impulses results in bliss. The heavily conditioned mind is the cause of repeated changes and unhappiness. The soul that is not established in Self-knowledge is inclined to identify with the conditionings of the mind.

COMMENTARY

The innate state of a soul is pure consciousness; it is only when the soul is identified with mental states and other objective phenomena that confusion results.

As long as unregulated mental processes dominate awareness, suffering does not cease. When the fluctuations and changes that occur in the restless mind cease, perceptions of "otherness" cease.

When feelings of unhappiness and [ordinary] happiness do not distract a person from his or her completely calm state, then know that subliminal [below the threshold of conscious awareness] mental conditionings have ceased to be influential. When thought-waves cease, the ideas of "I am this" or "I am not this" do not arise and limit awareness. In one who is liberated while embodied, thoughts of misfortune, poverty or pride—or feelings of dullness and excitement—do not arise.

COMMENTARY

Suffering due to various extreme causes may be intense, or it may be mild (when expectations are not fulfilled or events occur which elicit feelings of impatience or frustration). Even in the midst of pleasurable circumstances the possibility of suffering exists. If happiness is solely dependent upon external circumstances, unhappiness may result when they are changed or removed.

Read verses 2 to 4 of Patanjali's yoga-sutras for a description of what occurs when restless mental waves (vrittis) are restrained and returned to a dormant state, and when they are influential.

When subliminal tendencies [vasanas] cease to be influential, innate [soul] qualities emerge. The manifestation of natural goodness in a liberated person's consciousness is known as sattva [purity]. This indicates that one is liberated while embodied.

The dissolution of the mind after the enlightened soul departs from the body cannot be accurately described. The state of the soul is then that of supreme quiescence [rest, stillness] and equilibrium. Souls which have transcended the mind and intelligence have realized the supreme state of peace.

COMMENTARY

Mental transformations (vrittis) cease when the driving forces of subliminal tendencies (vasanas) are dormant. Then, when one is conscious, innate soul qualities spontaneously emerge.

The mind is needed to process information while the soul is still identified with a physical, astral, or causal body. When awareness is removed from physical, astral, and causal involvements, only Self-realization remains. This realization also occurs during deep, transcendent, superconscious meditation.

There are two supports of the mind with innumerable ideas; the movement of prana [life force] and the enlightened soul's obstinate, illusional opinion [because of being identified with mental processes] that it is other than a pure-conscious being. When prana moves through the subtle channels in the body, there are movements (fluctuations) in awareness and in the mind. When prana ceases to move, awareness ceases to be fragmented and mental waves cease.

COMMENTARY

Our minds are units of a universal mind. When life forces are restless, thoughts are empowered. The mistaken idea that one is a mind rather than a soul keeps awareness confined to the mind and its processes. When, during meditation life forces are made calm and orderly by attentive (kriya yoga) pranayama practice, awareness is clarified.

When soul awareness is self-abiding, a pure state of awareness is naturally experienced. Therefore, you can realize the natural, pure state by either pacifying the movements of prana or by not disturbing the uniformity of your innate awareness of being. When the natural, pure state is disturbed, thoughts and feelings are stimulated and dormant subliminal tendencies are activated.

To calm the mind, the practitioner of yoga practices pranayama, meditation, and other proper and appropriate methods. Enlightened yogis regard pranayama practice as the most appropriate method for quieting the mind.

COMMENTARY

Other "appropriate methods" may include wholesome lifestyle regimens, a natural food diet, and actualization of the yamas and niyamas (the first two stages of raja yoga practice described in chapter two of Patanjali's yoga-sutras).

When obstinately clinging to illusions (misperceptions), and therefore abandoning a thorough enquiry into the nature of truth, one experiences various kinds of limitations. Caught up in his or her own illusions, whatever is seen or thought to be real [when it is not] produces more delusions [erroneous concepts]. Then, because of the intensity of mental conditionings and illusions, one becomes unaware of the essence of being and misperceives what is observed or experienced.

When the psychological condition is not dense, and has become transparent, the liberated soul lives by the momentum of past influences [even as a potter's wheel continues to turn after the initial impulse has been withdrawn]. The seeds of karma [mental conditionings] will not have any causative influence in the future. Upon departing from the body, the awareness of such a one is merged into the Infinite.

COMMENTARY

The thoughts and actions of a fully enlightened person do not create new problem-causing subconscious conditionings (karmic impressions). Only the causative force of subconscious impressions (samskaras) of past actions, thoughts, desires, and experiences may be somewhat influential. When these are neutralized, wise choices and spontaneous, appropriate actions are the determining factors.

Of the two root-causes of spiritual ignorance [movements of prana and obstinate clinging to illusions], if one is gotten rid of, the other is also removed, for they are interdependent. Illusions are produced by the mind and mental fluctuations are produced by the movements of prana. One goads the other into action. Motion is natural to prana. When it influences awareness, mental waves are produced and movements of mental waves keeps prana in motion.

There is nothing that purifies the mind that is equal to God-knowledge. The devotee who is perfected in yoga [samadhi], in the course of time discovers that knowledge in the Self. One who has faith [soon] acquires God-knowledge. Devoted to [realizing] that, controlling the senses, and having wisdom, the devotee quickly attains the tranquil state. – *Bhagavad Gita 4:38, 39*

Meditation seminar participants: Munich Germany, April 29.

Dialogue

The Philosophy, Tradition & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are requested by readers. Please use the form provided with each issue to participate. Share your thoughts and needs for the benefit of others who peruse these pages.

Some kriya yoga teachers recommend that the throat be lubricated with oil before practicing kriya pranayama. Is this necessary?

Lubricating the throat is only recommended if dryness occurs. If it is necessary (for most people it is not), put a small quantity (a quarter of a teaspoon, approximately) of olive oil or ghee at the back of the tongue and swallow gently until the throat feels coated with the lubricant. Then practice kriya pranayama.

Should one pause to breathe normally between kriya pranayamas, or should pranayama breathing be continuous?

Experiment until you can practice comfortably without having to interrupt the sequence of pranayamas. In time, you will discover the breathing rhythm (neither too fast nor too slow) that is satisfying. There will be a natural, momentary pause at the end of inhalation and exhalation. Concentrate on the flow of current upwards and downwards through the spinal pathway. The breathing rhythm will then easily be regulated. After completing pranayama practice, be sure to sit for a while (several minutes or for however long you may be inclined) in the calm state.

Through the years, you have written several commentaries on Patanjali's yoga-sutras. How has your understanding improved as you have done this?

I first wrote a commentary on the yoga-sutras in 1964 because I wanted the experience of doing it. Later, I included the yoga-sutras in a few other books (as I have recently done in *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*) because I think it important that truth seekers have access to the information. Through the years, my understanding of the mean-

ings of the sutras has improved. Regular reading of basic texts on yoga philosophy and practice is highly recommended. As we become more insightful, we are able perceive what we did not, or could not, see before. The yoga-sutras and the Bhagavad Gita are the two basic texts all kriya yoga practitioners should read. For my commentary on the Gita, read *The Eternal Way*.

Since God is individualized as us and we are to acknowledge, claim, and accept what is already available, how do we get to the stage where we can do it? Since we are identified with the physical sense of self, what is the most reliable way to be released from this condition?

Constantly be aware of your true nature in relationship to God. Use your powers of intellectual discernment to clearly understand what you are and what God is. Meditate until you experience a clear, thought-free, knowing state. Whenever you notice that you are in a mode of dualistic thinking, immediately correct your point of view. In time, intuitive insight will prevail. You may then wonder why you didn't see it before. You will live from that state of knowing, rather than looking at it with a hope of realizing it.

Are kundalini energies the same as the chi energy that flows when doing a tai chi routine?

All vital forces that circulate in the body are aspects of the soul force referred to as kundalini.

How important is it to coordinate listening to a mantra with breathing?

Listening to a meditation mantra in accord with breathing is usually done with two-syllable mantras such as hong-sau and so-hum. The first word is mentally recited (or listened to) with inhalation; the second word is mentally recited (or listened to) with exhalation. Sometimes, a single word mantra is mentally recited (or listened to) with inhalation or with exhalation. When breathing becomes slow and subtle, it can be disregarded. Eventually, the mantra fades away. A single word (or a phrase) may be mentally recited or listened to without awareness of breathing. At the beginning of meditation practice, awareness of breathing and of the mantra more completely involves one's attention.

What are the results (or benefits) of learning to have lucid dreams?

Lucid dreams (being aware of dreams as they occur) can enable one to observe the relationship between thoughts and expectations and their results. If you have lucid dreams, you might enjoy using your will (gentle intention) to change the sequence of dream-events. Or you might levitate, travel rapidly through space, walk through walls, or adjust your awareness to experience clarified states merely by willing to do so. When dreaming, anything that can be imagined can be experienced. When you know that adjustments of viewpoint determine the reality you perceive, you can use imagination and adjust your viewpoint when you are not dreaming. The ordinary waking state has been referred to (by some yogis, and others) as being dreamlike. Until you are fully, spiritually awake, what kind of waking dreams do you prefer to experience? You can choose (and experience) health, happiness, harmonious relationships, success, prosperity, and rapid spiritual growth just as easily (and more enjoyably) as many people consciously or unconsciously choose illness, unhappiness, discordant relationships, difficulties, and limitations.

I heard someone say that, during meditation, when the peak experience occurs, to go deeper one could use a mantra; that the vibratory influence of the mantra would have a calming effect on the mind. I've thought that the purpose of using a technique was served once the peak experience was accomplished, and that going deeper was just a matter of letting it happen naturally and spontaneously.

When the peak experience (clear, thought-free awareness) is established, there is no need to practice a meditation technique. At this stage, one can patiently wait, observe, and allow the innate soul urge to be fully awake to determine the meditation experience. If attention becomes distracted, it can be withdrawn and internalized by choice. If this is not possible, one can again use a mantra or any other method (such as intentional contemplation for the purpose of acquiring insight or to actualize a transcendent state of awareness). In the yoga-sutras, contemplation is defined as the integration of concentration, meditation, and the culmination of meditative concentration. The Sanskrit word for this process is *samyama* (*sam*, "to bring together" attention

and awareness with the object being meditatively examined) by *yama* (self-controlled restraint [bringing back] of attention from involvements with distractions). Mastery of attention is the key to success in meditation practice, as well as to living effectively.

Why did Patanjali elaborate so extensively on unrestricted soul abilities (in the third chapter of the yoga-sutras)?

Patanjali recorded the teachings of yogis who had discovered the way to Self- and God-realization. He may have described the various *siddhis* (exceptional powers of perception and abilities) for the purpose of letting future practitioners of yoga know what they might—or what is possible to—experience. He did mention that siddhis should primarily be used to elicit samadhi states and to accomplish liberation of consciousness. The ability to discern the karmic condition (3:23) can be used to know the existence and characteristics of troublesome subconscious conditionings and to eliminate them. Contemplation on friendliness, compassion, and other noble qualities (3:24) can result in actualization of mental, moral, and spiritual strength. By contemplation on the light (reality and characteristics) of consciousness (3:26) knowledge can be acquired. By contemplation on the chakras and nervous system (3:30) knowledge of flows of life force and other internal conditions can be acquired. Contemplation on the spiritual eye and crown chakra (3:33) enables the meditator to have direct perception of higher realities. Contemplation on the true nature of the Self as being distinct from mind and intellect (3:36) can result in Self-realization.

What is the best way to practice Self-inquiry?

Examine your innermost perception of what you are. When the mind is calm and you are observant, you know that you are other than your mind and body. There is no need to try to discover your Self. Remove your attention from all that you are not. What you are will then remain. At first, the practice of Self-inquiry may involve thinking. When thoughts become dormant, your true nature will be realized (accurately apprehended and experienced).

I have experienced that when I did 50 or more kriya pranayamas a day, I was not able to sleep soundly at night. How should I proceed?

Analyze your situation to see if there is really a relationship between pranayama practice and your inability to sleep restfully. Is excessive pranayama practice the cause, or are you stressed or worried because of difficult personal circumstances? Experiment by reducing the number of pranayamas to see if doing this makes a difference. If it does, adjust your practice routine accordingly. Also, examine your lifestyle, work situation, and personal relationships and circumstances.

I have a regular routine for practicing kriya meditation techniques when I meditate alone. When I am in a group situation and the leader is giving directions, what should I do then?

If the leader is your teacher, practice as instructed. Otherwise, quietly meditate in the way that you prefer.

What are the physical (and perhaps spiritual) implications of a pain in the spine at the site of the fourth (dorsal) chakra? It seems to be related to an illness that I have. It interrupts the flow of energy in the spine and sometimes causes cramps which distract my attention. Chiropractic adjustments help somewhat to relieve the discomfort.

Since chiropractic adjustments are helpful, ask what the specific cause of the problem is (physical, mental, or emotional), then do what needs to be done to eliminate it. Also, to encourage your innate powers to restore your body to perfect health and function, cultivate thoughts and feelings of being radiantly alive and vital.

Om is described as the vibration of the power of Consciousness that, when influenced by tamas guna, produces matter. Why is it then considered to be a vehicle for meditating superconsciously? Is the process of listening to Om like following a river back to its source? Or is it that Om, after producing Primal Nature, is now more powerfully influenced by sattvic influences?

All three attributes of nature pervade the field of the Om vibration. Tamasic influences contribute to manifestations of gross matters; rajasic influences are instrumental in the actions that occur; sattvic influences are enlivening and illuminating. When meditating on (in) Om, contemplate its source (the Oversoul aspect of God or Consciousness), merge your awareness with Om, and be inclined to transcend it.

I've read that a person in samadhi "sleeps" in relationship to the world and is awake to a higher state. Several years ago, I felt that I was close to experiencing samadhi, but refused to do so because I am not ready for this. I still want to be focused here and now.

When samadhi (either identification of awareness with an object of meditation or transcendent superconsciousness) is experienced, there is no awareness of external conditions. During the absence of samadhi states, external conditions are perceived. The ultimate samadhi (realization of oneness) is that of being consciously Self- and God-aware at all times, weather meditating or not. When you are "ready" (prepared, willing, and receptive), you will be fully awake.

Why have Lahiri Mahasaya's writings not been translated into English and made available to kriya devotees?

During his later years, Lahiri Mahasaya wrote commentaries on several scriptures, which were published by one of his disciples and distributed to kriya initiates for their private use. Because of his concise writing style, unique scriptural interpretation, and use of descriptive words that only disciples who had personal contact with him knew the meanings, his commentaries are not widely known.

What is a reasonable duration of time to allow for demonstrating results of our actions?

It will be determined by what one wants to accomplish, whether it is possible, whether supportive conditions prevail, and the actions which are performed. Clearly define what you want to accomplish. Attract or create supportive conditions. Act as necessary to actualize your desire. Actions may be subjective or objective, or both. Visualize the fulfillment of your desires. If you cannot imagine how circumstances will be, imagine how you will feel when your desires are actualized or fulfilled. Be optimistic. Skillfully perform physical actions chosen to produce desired results. Be receptive to unplanned good fortune.

I am aware of the fact that I am sometimes arrogant. I am reactive to what others say, somewhat competitive in relationship to others, express my opinion when it is not requested, and often behave and speak as though I

know more than I do. I am inclined to endeavor to compensate for my feelings of insecurity by being too assertive and talkative.

Acknowledging a problem is the first step in solving it. Change your viewpoint: from personality-centeredness to Self-awareness (awareness of your true nature). Go deep within. Meditate more. Remember that you are a spiritual being. Cultivate humility, which will be natural for you when you accept the truth about your real nature in relationship to the wholeness of life. Examine your mental attitudes and your feelings to discover if you are suppressing feelings of frustration and anger. If so, renounce those mental and emotional states. Live effectively to avoid frustration and develop Self- (soul) confidence. Be more aware of the needs of others. Be more kind and thoughtful.

What is the origin of the sound that is inwardly heard when meditating on Om?

At first, the sounds in the inner ears may be similar to the sound that is heard when putting an empty bottle or sea shell to one's ear. Then the sound produced by the nervous system may be heard. Whatever is heard can be used as a mantra, to attract your attention and keep it focused. Imagine the sound to be an aspect of the Om vibration. The Sanskrit word used to describe the sound of Om is *pranava*, "humming"—a continuous (without beginning or ending), flowing vibration that emerges in the meditator's awareness. By listening to this sound, attention becomes so absorbed in it that awareness is removed from involvement with thoughts and moods. Eventually, awareness of the sound ceases. The meditator then experiences a state of conscious, clear awareness which does not require the support of thoughts, moods, or an object of concentration. This state of clarified awareness provides complete rest for the nervous system, mental peacefulness, and the opportunity to experience spontaneous perceptions of the essence of one's being. You can listen to Om any time when meditating, especially after kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra practice.

In Patanjali's yoga-sutras (1:27,18), concentrated meditation on Om is described as one of several ways to elicit samadhi: "The evidential (verifying] aspect of God is Om. Meditation on Om culminates in knowl-

edge of its meaning and in Self- and God-realization." Also (1:35): "Perception of subtle cosmic forces and their actions and manifestations causes changes in the meditator's awareness which contribute to mental stability."

Samadhi (a unified state of awareness) is not produced by our actions. Our actions (kriyas) such as cultivation of peacefulness, dispassion, devotion to God, selfless prayer, practice of meditation techniques, and letting go of the illusional sense of selfhood allows our awareness to be clarified. Kriyas (right actions) are practiced to resist, weaken, and remove all mental and physical obstacles to Self- and God-realization (yoga-sutras 2:2).

Samadhi is our natural awareness. When we are not established in samadhi, our awareness is identified with conditioned states of awareness and has to be restored to its natural state. Attentive kriya yoga practices restores our awareness to wholeness.

For as long as we continue to think that we are self-conscious (egocentric) beings in need of attaining Self-realization or finding or connecting with God (which is normal when we first start on the spiritual path), we are inclined to think and behave in accord with that mistaken idea.

The following excerpt from a published commentary on Lahiri Mahasaya's words regarding the inner meaning of the Bhagavad Gita, written by his disciple Bhupendranath Sanyal, explains what occurs when one listens to the Om vibration:

> When your intelligence, which was confused by conflicting [philosophical] opinions, is stable in realization of oneness [samadhi], then shall you awaken to insightful knowledge.
>
> – *Bhagavad Gita 2:55*

Lahiri Mahasaya's Interpretation:
By always being [established] in the sound waves of Om, yoga or unity is realized. Thus, always listen to the sound of Om.

Bhupendranath Sanyal's commentary:
Repeated [kriya] pranayamas steady the life force within you.

> After doing your meditation for some time with great concentration, you will hear a vibration like [that] of a fine substance. By pranayama practice that calms the life force, a sound emerges which [may be] followed by the sound of a bell ringing at a distance. In the beginning, it will create a fluctuation in the mind. By steadying the Self in it, the sound changes to the sound of Om, which is self-existing and gives the devotee a still state of mind and heart [feeling nature]. The great saint Kabir wrote: "Your whole body says God and the pores of your body sound with Om." This sweet spiritual sound fills the body and mind with peaceful stillness. Awareness gets lost in this sound and from it emerges true knowledge of the Supreme Self. This is yoga, unification or realization of the Self.

Lahiri Mahasaya emphasized that kriya yoga devotees should meditate for the purpose of Self- and God-realization rather than be concerned about lesser results.

Life from the Center is a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It is amazing. It is triumphant. It is radiant. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time. – *Thomas R. Kelly / A Life of Devotion*

The best preacher [guide] is the heart [soul]; the best teacher is time; the best book is the world; the best friend is God. – *The Talmud*

News

During the first week of June, ten thousand copies of *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice* were delivered at our book warehouse. If you have not yet requested your copy, please do so now. Read it to review your lifestyle and meditation routines. Also read *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. In these two books all of the basic information you need to succeed on the spiritual path is provided.

Also, use the enclosed form to send us names and addresses of kriya initiates you know who are not affiliated with CSA. We will send a printed announcement to let them know about this book.

New York City, Cleveland, Arizona, Florida, Southern California

If you know of yoga-oriented or new age magazines or newspapers that are distributed in your area, send us a copy to help us plan future publicity for meditation seminars which may be scheduled for early next year. From now on, instead of visiting several cities annually, I will only offer regional seminars and retreats.

Countries Outside the United States

If you know of yoga-oriented or new age magazines or newspapers that are published in your country, send us a copy to help us plan advertising for our books and free literature. (*Note*: we advertise regularly in *Yoga and Health* [U.K.] and *Life Positive* [India] magazines, so do not send us these publications.)

Another Book Scheduled for Publication in India

Motilal Banarsidass, with offices in Delhi and bookstores in eight cities, will publish *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* later this year. (See *Truth Journal* for information about the English language editions of my books distributed by Motilal Banarsidass and other publishers in India.)

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Holy Season Meditation
Saturday, December 9 / 10 a.m to 1 p.m. Dinner at 2 p.m
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PUBLISHED JUNE 2000

A GUIDE TO KRIYA YOGA PRACTICE

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- A review of the meditation techniques and routines for beginning, intermediate, and advanced participation.
- Answers to questions about philosophical concepts, traditions, and practices.
- Patanjali's yoga-sutras: an authoritative source of information on kriya yoga. Every truth seeker should regularly read this treatise.
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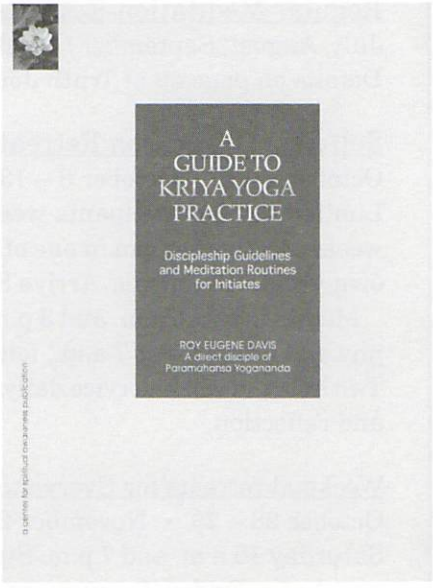

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Radiance

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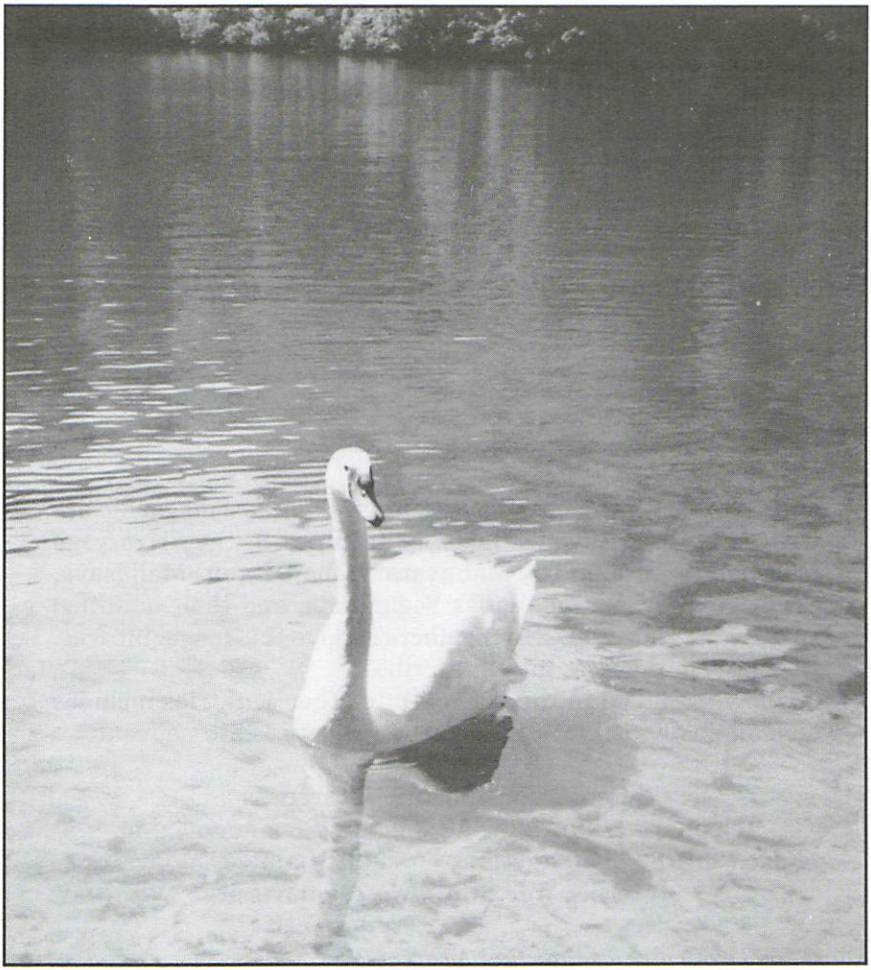
October – December 2000



An Enlivening Power is Nurturing the Universe and We Can Learn to Cooperate With It

Focus your attention within [when meditating]. You will experience new power, new strength, and new peace of body, mind, and spirit. All bonds that limit you will be vanquished. – *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Restless thoughts persist because of restless movements of prana. When the devotee is no longer aware of meditating and is firm in Self-knowledge which is nondual and blissful, a state of oneness is experienced. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

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Unless otherwise noted, the articles in *Radiance* magazine are written by Roy Eugene Davis for initiates in the kriya yoga tradition represented by Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, and their qualified successors. Initiated CSA members receive this magazine free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe.

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How to Relate to and Overcome the Influences of the Three Constituent Attributes of Nature

guna A constituent [part of a whole] attribute of nature.

The three gunas—sattwa (sometimes sattva, pronounced with a "w" sound), rajas, and tamas—are the influential attributes of nature which regulate the cosmic forces of the power of Consciousness. Sattwa (*sat*, truth of being) is purifying, elevating, and illuminating. Rajas, manifested by the tension between sattwa and tamas (heaviness, inertia) causes actions and transformation.

Originated by the positive (sattwa) and negative (tamas) poles within the Godhead or Oversoul and the interactions (rajas) between them, these three attribute-influences prevail at all levels of cosmic manifestation. In the field of primordial nature they make possible Om's self-referring processes which produce space, time, and individualized cosmic forces. Projected from the field of primordial nature, their interactions produce the five subtle instruments of sense perception, five subtle instruments of action, and five element-influences that manifest gross matter.

Combinations of the five subtle element-influences (of ether or space with cosmic forces, air, fire, water, earth) produce the governing influences—vata dosha (circulating); pitta dosha (heating and transformative); kapha dosha (moistening and lubricating)—which determine the basic mind-body constitution of living things and regulate their internal processes. Because they can also influence mental, emotional, and physical states and states of awareness, it is beneficial for kriya yoga practitioners to understand and wisely relate to them until their influences are balanced and supportive, neutralized, or transcended.

Chapter fourteen in the Bhagavad Gita provides insight into the gunas and the effects of their influences:

> Sattwa, rajas, tamas—the three qualities born of nature— bind the imperishable dweller (true Self) in the body.
>
> Of these, sattwa is pure, illuminating, and health-giving. It

confines [restricts] soul awareness by inclining it to be attached to happiness and knowledge.

Rajas is of the nature of passion arising from craving and attachment. It confines by inclining the [embodied] soul to be attached to actions.

Tamas is born of ignorance which confuses all embodied beings. It confines by inclining the soul to be negligent, indolent [lazy, inactive], and unconscious.

When the influence of sattwa is dominant, it prevails over rajas and tamas; when the influence of rajas is dominant, it prevails over sattwa and tamas; when the influence of tamas is dominant, it prevails over sattwa and rajas.

When the light of knowledge shines through all gates of the body, sattwa is dominant.

When the influence of rajas is dominant, [then] greed, ego-driven endeavors, restlessness, and [insatiable] desires become pronounced.

When the embodied soul makes its transition under the influence of sattwa, it attains the pure realms of those who know the highest [truth].

One who departs the body with rajas dominant is reborn among those who are attached to actions. If departing when tamas is dominant, dullness prevails and one is [may] be born among people who are deluded.

The fruit [result] of good action is sattwic; the fruit of rajasic action is pain; that of tamasic action is ignorance.

From sattwa, knowledge is born; from rajas, desire is born; from tamas, negligence and delusion result.

Those who are established in sattwa go upward (experience spiritual growth); the rajasic stay in the middle (make little or no progress); established in tamas, one goes downward [falls back into delusion].

The seer who perceives no other [influential] agent than that of the gunas, and knows that [supreme Consciousness] which is higher than them, attains pure consciousness.

When the embodied Self transcends these three qualities of nature which originated the body, it is released from birth,

death, old age, and pain, and realizes immortality.

– *Bhagavad Gita, chapter 14 (The Yoga of the Discernment of the Qualities of Nature) 5–20*

Note that the influences of the gunas can be both helpful and restrictive. Although sattwic influences can expand and clarify awareness, they can also cause us to be inclined to be overly fascinated by the spiritual happiness we experience and knowledge of cosmic processes that is acquired.

Rajasic influences make possible all beneficial transformative actions, those which occur spontaneously and cause psychological transformation and spiritual growth and those which we perform with conscious intention. They may also incline us to be restless and want to be excessively action-oriented with or without a clear sense of meaningful purpose.

Tamasic influences can have a stabilizing effect; they can also incline us to be complacent, contribute to mental dullness, and blur our awareness. Tamas guna is said to be "born of ignorance" because it is produced or manifested by inertia (influenced by the enlivening power of sattwa guna). Individuals who are partially conscious and knowledgeable while still impelled by tendencies rooted in the subconscious and unconscious realms of the mind, are confused and tend to wander aimlessly through life.

Meditators whose awareness is sattwic are attracted to the joy of discovery of higher realities. If awareness is rajasic, one may be attracted to or fascinated by subjective perceptions and "mystical" experiences. If awareness is tamasic, one may tend to become semiconscious or go to sleep and dream when meditating.

When we are Self-realized we can have the support of nature's influences without being restricted by them. When we are liberated, the gunas are no longer influential (yoga-sutras 4:30–32).

By improving of our powers of discriminative intelligence and intuition, cultivating soul peace in all circumstances, and adopting constructive mental attitudes and behaviors, rajasic and tamasic influences can be weakened and neutralized and sattwic qualities increased. The fundamental behavioral guideline for kriya yogis is to choose thoughts, feelings, personal behaviors, circumstances, relationships, and actions that are entirely sattwic: wholesome and elevating. Until

we are able to do this of our own volition, it can be helpful to emulate the behaviors of enlightened souls. The following excerpt is from *Yoga Vashishta Ramayana*:

> Established in truth-realization, the great sages lived constantly in a condition of peace and equanimity. Free from psychological predisposition, they did not seek or reject either life or death. They remained firm in direct experience [of truth] and were engaged in diverse activities in accordance with scriptural rules which they knew to be appropriate conduct. They retained their equanimity even in situations where others would have lost their peace and balanced state of mind. Their mind had fully entered into the state of sattva [divine nature] and was therefore utterly free from delusion, from egotism, and from the desire for achievement, though they did not reject such achievement or the rewards for their actions. They were engaged in natural activities, allowing all actions to proceed from them without ego-motivated volition. Emulate their actions. Let your personality be egoless and let appropriate actions spontaneously proceed from you. Infinite Consciousness alone is the truth; it is that which has put on [assumed] this appearance of diversity.

While we cannot actually be egoless while observing and relating to objective circumstances, the ego (illusional sense of selfhood) can be purified and known for what it is.

Note: Yoga-Vashishta Ramayana, attributed to Valmiki, the composer of the Ramayana, is presented as a dialogue between Prince Rama and his teacher Vashishta.

Dialogue

The Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are requested by readers. Please use the form provided with each issue to participate. Share your thoughts and needs for the benefit of others who peruse these pages.

I feel physically, mentally, and emotionally better in some geographical locations than I do in others. What are some of the [possible] effects of geography, altitude, materials used in buildings that one lives in, and any other environmental conditions that may influence one's ability to be healthy and to experience spiritual growth.

It is best to live where you feel most comfortable. Some people feel more "at home" in a warm, sunny climate near a lake or an ocean. Others prefer the mountains, a desert area, or a region of the country where seasonal changes are more obvious. Wherever one chooses to live, it is best to be close to nature rather than dwell in a city or a community where there is much traffic, noise, and restless activity.

A clean, harmonious environment is ideal. Buildings and furnishings made of natural materials are healthier. Synthetic materials, often used in wall and ceiling insulation products, floor coverings, kitchen and bathroom wall coverings and counters, and furniture exude harmful chemicals, as do various kinds of plastics. Air ducts should be regularly cleaned. Copper water pipes are more desirable than plastic: slime, toxic matter and bacteria can more easily accumulate in the latter. When drawing water from a faucet in the morning, let the water run for at least thirty seconds to loosen and flush any debris. Or use distilled water for drinking and when preparing foods. Plastic containers should not be used to store food or water, nor should foods or liquids packaged in plastic containers be purchased. Bathroom walls, counters, and cabinets should be regularly cleaned to avoid an accumulation of residues of vapors from toilet flushings. Sustained closeness to magnetic fields produced by electric currents should be avoided. It is best not to sit close to a television set or have an electric clock or radio near the head of the bed. Electric blankets should not be used. Speculation regarding the possibility of harmful effects on the brain caused by weak

microwave radiations from cell telephones has been recently published. Some researchers recommend that an ear receiver be used, with the cell phone at least three feet from the head. Electric power lines should not be near homes or public buildings.

Many people believe that the placement and layout of a dwelling place may either be supportive or debilitating. The *sthaptya* (or *vastu*, "land or site") *veda* (knowledge) system, believed by some people to be a precursor to *feng shui* (a Chinese system) recommends guidelines for orientation, placement, and proportion of structures. According to the vastu veda system, the building should be rectangular, with the entrance on the east and aligned with the center of the building; another door or window should be on the opposite side of the house to allow solar energy to flow through easily. The center of the house should have an open space. Hallways and entrances to rooms should be placed so that one can move gracefully from one part of the abode to another. High ceilings are best, at least in the main living area. A "sacred space," a room or a designated area of a room, for meditation and quiet reflection should be maintained.

I've noticed that many people practice healing by laying their hands on others and [seem to] use various siddhi abilities to earn money. I notice, at times, my hands become very hot and I wonder how [or if] this condition can be used to further my spiritual growth.

Attempting to heal by putting the hands on (or near) a person has become more widely practiced in recent years. Life force *can* flow from one person to another in this manner; whether or not it is of value as it is practiced by many individuals is debatable. Often, the reported benefits are due to the sense of comfort and well-being the patient-client feels because of having been given attention. The placebo (Latin "I shall please") effect is well-known: if one believes that a regimen of therapy or a medication is beneficial, belief can strengthen the immune system, result in other positive physiological responses, and cause one to feel more confident and peaceful.

If one has exceptional abilities (siddhis), there is no harm in using them wisely to help oneself or others. If a professional service is rendered, reasonable payment for the practitioner's attention and time is appropriate. One should not, of course, "be in the business of helping

others" for the sake of making money.

Most people who seek the assistance of energy-channelers would be better off if they learned to help themselves to wellness by attitude adjustment, behavior modification, and the implementation of other wholesome lifestyle regimens. Medical doctors, for instance, know that perhaps 60 (or more) percent of patients who seek their help would improve if they ignored their symptoms, obtained rest, and continued their ordinary activities. (I am not suggesting that professional help not be gotten when needed.)

Through the years, I have met many individuals—who told me that they attended a course of instruction for the purpose of learning to channel energy to others—who were neither mentally alert, emotionally balanced, nor spiritually aware. Even if they could be a conduit for a flow of life force, and had good intentions, I would not want to be on the receiving end of their treatment.

I do not know the cause of excessive heat manifesting in your hands. To cool them, you might want to experiment: put your hands in a pan of cool water; hold your hands over your head by extending your arms upward for a minute or two; or visualize (and feel) your hands becoming cooler. Since it is possible to direct a flow of blood to the hands (or any part of the body) by gentle use of imagination and will, it should be possible to slightly reduce the flow of blood to your hands in the same manner. If energy is the cause of heating, it can be reduced by withdrawing it from the afflicted area or balancing its flow.

If excessive heating of the body occurs because of increased flows of life force as a result of concentrated meditation practice, wearing a pearl, or a yellow sapphire, may be helpful. If this is done, it should be next to (or very near) the skin, either set in a ring worn on a finger or in a pendant on a chain necklace. Yellow sapphire (at least two carets) is expensive. Yellow citrine (quartz) of three or more carets or any yellow, clear gemstone can be used as a substitute. The color, rather than the chemical composition of the mineral, is said to have the beneficial influence (gem dealers who are primarily interested in earning money may be inclined to disagree).

I am almost desperate in my desire to be Self-realized. Is there anything I can do to more quickly be Self-realized, or is there anyone to whom I can

go who can help?

Ardent yearning to be enlightened can keep you steadfast on the spiritual path. Desire that causes mental and emotional unrest is in conflict with your aspiration. By "complete" practice of kriya yoga: right, disciplined living; patient, attentive inquiry into the reality of your true nature and of God; and regular superconscious meditation practice, your soul qualities and powers of perception will spontaneously unfold as mental, emotional, and physical restrictions are weakened and removed. During my first year with Paramahansa Yogananda, he said to me, "Roy, you should want [to know] God with such devotional ardor that you feel you cannot wait for another day to pass before having that realization, but you must have the patience to wait if it doesn't occur that day."

Until you are Self-realized, to the best of your ability live as though you were Self-realized. Don't wait to be Self-realized to have peace of mind and other supportive circumstances. Use the skills you now have to live an ideal life.

I am inclined to frequently consider some of my ideas, meditative perceptions, and events that occur in my life to be very significant. When I am calm and objective, I have a more rational view of them. How can I always be rational and discerning?

Train yourself to be calm and objective at all times regardless of what is experienced or observed. This can more easily be done by learning to always be Self-centered (aware of your true nature in relationship to the wholeness of life). Your intellectual and intuitive powers will then be more refined and accurate.

How can one have no likes or dislikes (preferences or aversions) without becoming passive or inactive?

It is normal to have preferences and to make choices that will result in satisfaction of wholesome desires. What is recommended is that obsessive mental and emotional attachments be avoided. Aversion is a strong feeling of distaste or dislike. Disagreeable or unwanted thoughts, feelings, or circumstances can be ignored rather than allowing feelings of repulsion to persist. When we are able to make wise choices which are not influenced by obsessive thinking or undisciplined emotions, we can live enthusiastically and freely with conscious aware-

ness of meaningful purpose.

Can the benefits of being in proximity to a guru be explained in scientific terms?

A dictionary defines *science* as the observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena. A *guru* is a teacher. By association with a qualified teacher, we are provided with opportunities to learn—by listening, observing, and assuming their viewpoints and states of awareness. In the presence of a spiritually enlightened teacher we may also experience clarification of awareness and receive a transmission of their vital force which can arouse our dormant soul forces. The best way to benefit from association (or mental and spiritual attunement) with a guru is to listen, observe, practice what is learned, and patiently wait for understanding to unfold and spiritual growth to occur.

Explain how "kriya yoga practice quickens spiritual evolution."

Right actions (kriyas) contribute to total well-being, enable us to live effectively, and remove all mental and physical obstacles that confine our awareness. When our awareness is no longer confined, we realize (experience and know) our oneness with the wholeness of life. Conscious awareness of unification is yoga, in contrast to ordinary, fragmented and thus confused states of awareness. Although we are, at the innermost core of being, flawless units of one Consciousness, if we are not aware of this fact we need to learn to be aware of what we are. By right thinking, right living, and meditation practiced to the stage of superconsciousness, debilitating subconscious conditionings are weakened and neutralized, our awareness is clarified, and our innate impulse to have our awareness restored to wholeness can more easily be actualized. Spiritual growth then more rapidly occurs.

Commentary

Hatha Yoga Pradipika
(Light on Hatha Yoga)

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (composed by Yogi Swatmarama, circa 14th century) is the most widely used text on the subject. In it, various physical disciplines are integrated with the higher spiritual aspirations and practices of raja yoga, also known as eight-limbed yoga as described in chapter two (titled Kriya Yoga) of Patanjali's yoga-sutras (2nd century). The word *pradipika*, translated as "light" in the title used for Swatmarama's text, can also be translated as "self-illuminating" and "that which illumines."

The aim of the dedicated hatha yoga practitioner is to first cleanse the body, make it immune to disease, and rid it of the limitations that are common to the ordinary person's experience. Hatha yoga practice "removes dullness (tamasic influences) and impurities" and balances the mind-body constitution.

The ultimate purpose of "complete" hatha yoga practice is to enable the practitioner to utilize the exceptional abilities and powers of concentration that are acquired to effectively practice meditative contemplation and awaken to full liberation of consciousness. The author of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* forthrightly asserts: "There are those who only perform hatha yoga without knowledge of raja yoga; them I consider to be deprived of the fruit (results) of their endeavors." Also: "If prana [life force] does not flow in the middle passage [sushumna nadi in the spine], if the bindu [source-essence of life force] is not steadied by regulated prana, if the mind does not reflect [the results of] spontaneous meditation, those who speak of spiritual knowledge are only indulging in boastful and false assertions."

Chapter One

1. Salutations to the glorious original guru who taught the knowledge of hatha yoga which shines forth as a stairway for those who aspire to ascend [progressively accomplish] the highest stage of yoga: raja yoga.

The "original" guru (teacher) is supreme Consciousness with knowledge of itself and all life-processes within it. As the innate knowledge of spiritually inclined souls emerged from within their pure-conscious nature, knowledge of practices which make possible unification (yoga) of individualized awareness also emerged. Supreme Consciousness is thus the real teacher.

Hatha is sometimes defined as "forceful," an indication that the practitioner is to resist, restrain, and overcome the instinctual (and conditioned) drives, tendencies, and habits which confine ordinary (egocentric) people to a life of bondage and limitation.

2. After reverently acknowledging the guru, Yogi Swatmarama presents the knowledge of hatha yoga only [as preparation] for [the practice of] raja yoga, the highest way.

As all devotees are advised to do before embarking on a course of action, the author of this treatise reverently acknowledges the true guru, supreme Consciousness. In this verse, it is clearly stated that it should be understood that knowledge (and practice) of hatha yoga prepares one for raja yoga practice. Raja yoga practice includes observance of ethical and moral guidelines; disciplined practices; meditation posture; pranayama (harmonizing flows of prana); detaching attention from externals and directing it inward; concentration; meditation; and samadhi. Samadhi is either the "bringing together" of the meditator's awareness with the object of meditative contemplation or the transcendence of both objective and subjective phenomena.

3. The highest state [that is possible to realize by practice] of raja yoga is [generally] unknown due to misconceptions which are the results of various [invalid] ideas and concepts. In good will and as a blessing, Swatmarama offers the light of hatha yoga.

The "highest state" is flawless Self- and God-realization which culminates in liberation of consciousness. The reality of this state is not comprehended by people whose minds are clouded with illusions (misperceptions of facts) and a variety of erroneous ideas. Just as darkness prevails when light is absent, so ignorance prevails when knowledge is not apprehended.

4. Yogi Matsyendranath had knowledge of hatha yoga. He gave it to Gorakhnath and others, and by their grace the author learned it.

Matsyendranath (circa 10th century) is considered to have been one of eighty-four "great adepts" in the hatha yoga tradition. Among his several disciples, Gorakhnath is especially respected.

5. – 8. (These verses acknowledge supreme Consciousness and the names of thirty-one accomplished teachers who transmitted this knowledge prior to the writing of this treatise.)

9. These mahasiddhas [great accomplished spiritual masters], having overcome [transcended] time [death] by the practice of hatha yoga, roam about in the universe.

It is said that some enlightened saints continue to abide in physical, astral, or causal realms for thousands of [earth] years before transcending their illusional sense of selfhood. They may 1) be engaged in spiritual practices to further purify their awareness; 2) be inwardly liberated yet still somewhat confined by the influences of the gunas; 3) serve as teachers; 4) choose (or agree) to remain in contact with the manifest realms to infuse it with spiritual radiance (as does Mahavatar Babaji).

10. For those who are continually tempered by the heat [*tapa*, burning] of spiritual, physical, and environmental pain, hatha yoga is like a hermitage [secluded retreat] that provides protection. For those who are always established in yoga, this practice is a foundation.

The anguish of yearning to be spiritually aware when it seems that progress is slow or nonexistent can be more painful than any physical or environmental hardship. Attentive yoga practice provides insights into the causes of discomfort and how to eliminate them, contributes to total well-being, and enables one to easily experience a continuous flow of harmonious events and circumstances. Whether one is new on the spiritual path or has advanced to the stage where superconscious states are being experienced and refined, yogic practices can be supportive.

11. Hatha yoga [practice] is the greatest secret of yogis who want to

accomplish perfection. Indeed, to be fruitful, it must be kept secret; if revealed, it becomes powerless.

Yoga (the processes and the culmination of right practice) can only be known by personal participation that provides insightful experience. Overt displays of piety or useless conversations with others about one's spiritual aspirations or practices are to be avoided. It is all right to inform individuals about yoga and its practices if they are sincerely interested in self-improvement and spiritual growth. Too much talking and socialization dissipates vital forces and makes trivial (common) that which should be considered to be of profound significance.

12. – 13. (These verses describe the ideal environment for yoga practice; it should be secluded and supportive.)

Any clear, quiet place with provisions for one's needs is suitable for spiritual practice.

14. Here, being devoid of excess thinking [about secular and other matters], yoga should be practiced as instructed by the guru.

After the philosophical principles and practices of yoga are learned, one should be dedicated to right practice of regimens and procedures. Thinking about matters which are not relevant should be avoided. Personal instruction obtained directly from a knowledgeable teacher is best. If this is not possible, helpful information can be obtained from available writings of a knowledgeable person.

15. Overeating, excessive exertion, talkativeness, [rigid] adherence to [fixed] lifestyle rules or routines, [excessive] socializing, and mental [and emotional] unsteadiness are obstacles to the practice of yoga.

When behaviors and conditions that interfere with endeavors to accomplish purposes are absent, orderly progress to the stage of successful accomplishment of those purposes can be rapid.

The ultimate aim of yoga practice is the uniting of the energy (shakti) of kundalini flowing upwards from the base of the spine with pure consciousness (shiva) at the crown chakra. Prior to this, life force (prana) flowing in the left (moon, lunar) channel along the left side of

the spine and in the right (sun, solar) channel are encouraged to flow in the central pathway (sushumna, "the radiant path"). This is accomplished by attentive practice of pranayama, mudras, and meditative concentration. Harmonious interactions between the left and right hemispheres of the brain then occur. The body becomes relaxed, mental processes are pacified, emotions become tranquil, and meditation can more easily be practiced.

16-a. Enthusiasm, perseverance, discrimination, unshakable faith, courage, and avoiding the company of self-centered people bring success in the practice of yoga.

Enthusiasm (Latin *en-*, in+ *theos*, God) is a Self-generated and Self-energized inclination to learn, experience, grow, act, and accomplish. With a strong will to live and prevail, we are naturally enthusiastic.

To persevere is to never give up when a goal is worthy of us and worthy of being attained. By right self-endeavor and God's grace, success on the spiritual path is assured.

By improving our powers of discriminative intelligence we can easily discern the difference between truth and untruth and between our pure-conscious essence of being and ordinary states of awareness.

Faith (confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing) enables us to effectively act when actions are required and to patiently wait when waiting is necessary. Those who practice yoga should have faith in God, faith in the teaching, faith in their teacher, and faith in themselves.

Courage (literally Self-empowerment from the heart or core of our being) enables us to boldly yet wisely confront circumstances that need to be confronted. To succeed on the spiritual path we need to honestly and insightfully examine our thoughts, feelings, behaviors, relationships, circumstances, motives, and goals, and make rational choices and perform appropriate, right actions.

When possible, friends and associates whose character and qualities are ideal should be preferred. When it is necessary to interact with people who are self-centered, confused, or spiritually unaware (and it often is), our Self-aware behavior should be considerate, appropriate, and of brief duration.

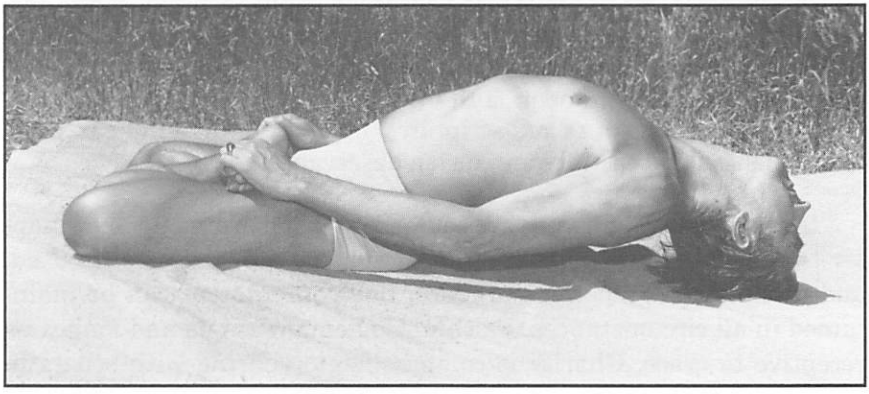
16-b. Harmlessness, truthfulness, honesty, continence [avoiding actions which waste vital forces while being absorbed in pure consciousness], forgiveness, endurance, compassion, humility, a moderate diet, and cleanliness are the ten rules of personal conduct.
16-c. Austerity, contentment, faith in God, charity, worship of God, listening to recitations of sacred scriptures, intellectual discernment, practice of mantra, and sacrifice are the ten observances.

Some of these guidelines are set forth and elaborated upon in chapter two of Patañjali's yoga-sutras. An austere life is simple, focused, and disciplined. By patient practice, Self-contentment can be maintained in all circumstances. Faith in God empowers us and makes us receptive to grace. Charity is compassionate sharing with others in accord with their needs and our capacity to freely give. To worship God is to reverently acknowledge God until the ego is so purified that God alone is perceived and experienced as the only reality. Listening to truth-impregnated words of scriptures (or reading or contemplating them) nourishes the mind with sattwic influences, provides useful knowledge, and awakens dormant soul memories of the facts of life. A meditation mantra which attracts our attention and is pleasant to use is an aid to concentration. Sacrifice is freely giving up mental attitudes, thoughts, feelings (emotions), behaviors, and relationships which are not supportive of our aspiration to be Self- and God-realized.

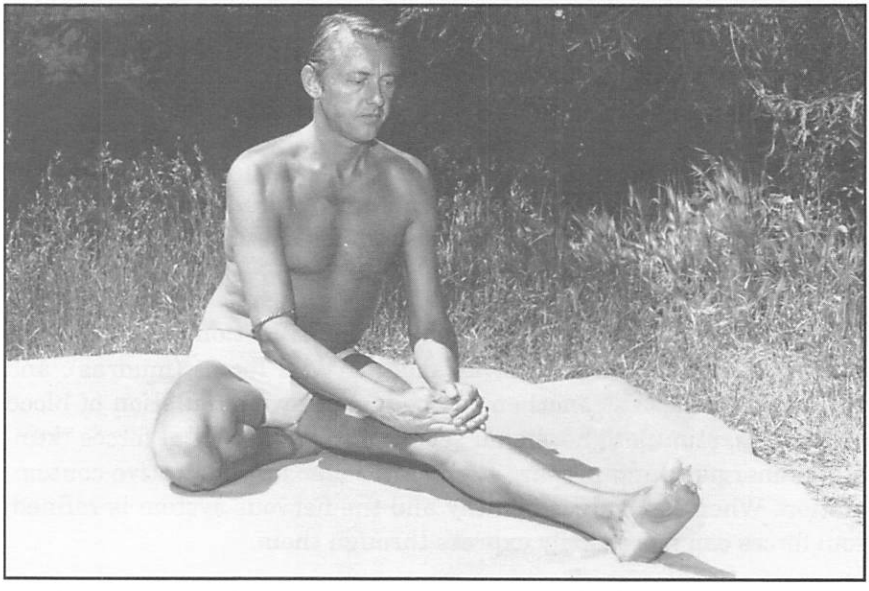
17. Prior to other practices, learning the asanas [postures] is the first part of hatha yoga. By practice of asanas [and other procedures], one acquires steadiness of body and mind, freedom from disease, and flexibility of the [joints and] limbs of the body.

Hatha yoga practices include physical purification processes, postures (asanas), techniques for awakening vital forces (mudras), and pranayama. These strengthen the body, improve circulation of blood and lymph, stimulate hormonal secretions, awaken vital forces (kundalini energies), and prepare the practitioner for meditative contemplation. When the body is healthy and the nervous system is refined, soul forces can more easily express through them.

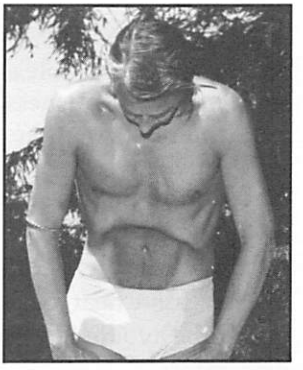
18. – 54. (Seventeen hatha yoga postures [asanas], which are considered to be the most useful, and variations of some of them, are described.)



Above: Matsyasana (Fish Pose).
Below: Mahamudra starting position. *(Photos, mid-1970s)*



When hatha yoga routines are practiced skillfully and appropriately (within one's capacity to practice), tiredness will not be experienced. After practice of the postures (which should be done in a relaxed, meditative mood), other techniques can be practiced.



Uddiyana Bhanda

The three basic bhandas are the root (at the base of spine) lock, the throat lock, and the one performed when practicing *uddiyana* (upward moving) bhanda. The root lock is accomplished by contracting the anal sphincter (ringlike muscle) and pulling it slightly upward. Kriya yoga initiates may do this when practicing mahamudra or the alternative technique which can be used prior to practice of kriya pranayama. This practice encourages life force in the lower chakras to flow up through the sushumna. The throat lock is accomplished by dropping the chin down on the upper chest to prevent air from entering or leaving the trachea. This may be done when practicing mahamudra or to restrain the breath when practicing certain pranayamas. Uddiyana bhanda is performed by lifting the abdominal cavity to elicit an upward movement of life force in the spine. All of the hatha yoga routines, and especially the mudras and pranayamas, improve the flow of life force through their respective channels (nadis).

56. Asanas, kumbhaka (breath retention), mudras, and concentration on inner sound comprise the sequence of hatha yoga practice.

After practicing a hatha routine, one is advised to meditatively contemplate the inner sound that spontaneously manifests (and to consider it to be an aspect of Om, the power of Consciousness).

57. One who is a brahmachari, takes moderate and pure food, is regular and intentional in yoga practice, and renounces attachments to sense pleasures, becomes accomplished in one year.

Brahmacharya (*brahma*, pure consciousness; *charya*, conduct) that

frees one from the bondage of conditioned behaviors enables a devotee to quickly awaken to Self- and God-realization; if not in "one year," then definitely much sooner than it would otherwise be accomplished. Patanjali defined *yoga* as "samadhi," conscious unification of individualized awareness with the one field of pure Consciousness. The highest form of yoga practice is superconsciousness.

58. Sattwic (agreeable and sweet) foods should be taken as an offering to supreme Consciousness, leaving one fourth of the stomach free.
59. Prohibited foods are those which are bitter, sour, salty, pungent, heating, [some] green vegetables, oil, sesame and mustard, alcohol, fish, flesh, curds, buttermilk, asafoetida, and garlic.
60. Unhealthy foods should be avoided: those which are reheated, dry, salty, acidic, stale, or are too varied [at one time].
61. Excessive heat [or cold], inappropriate companionship, and long trips should be avoided, as should any action or inaction which causes bodily discomfort.
62. The ideal foods for the yogi are good grains, honey, dry ginger, certain vegetables, mung [and similar] beans, and pure water.
63. The yogi should take nourishing and sweet food with ghee and milk. Food choices should nourish the tissues of the body and be pleasing and suitable.

Moderation in eating allows food transformation (the seven stages of which are plasma, blood, muscle, fat, bone, bone marrow and nerve tissues, and reproductive essences) to occur more easily. According to Ayurvedic theory, sweet (not necessarily sweet to the sense of taste, but having a sweet post-digestive effect) is most nourishing. Cooked food that has been allowed to cool down to room temperature for a few hours and is then reheated, may contain harmful bacteria. A well-balanced diet provides all of the six tastes: sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent. What is advised in the text is to avoid extreme or excessively strong tastes. Milk need not be used if it cannot be easily digested of if one chooses not to include it in the diet. The most useful guideline is to select foods for their nourishing effects.

64. Whether young or old, sick or feeble, one can be accomplished in all of the yogas by right practice.

Regardless of the calendar age or physical condition when one starts to practice yoga—attentive, right participation will result in success. Because the true Self is immortal, pure consciousness, it need not be limited by relative circumstances.

65. Perfection [accomplishment] results from practical application. Perfection cannot be accomplished by only reading the scriptures.

The right performance of actions (kriya yoga) which produce the desired results is the proven way to spiritual fulfillment.

66. Neither by wearing the garb of a siddha, nor by talking about that ideal state, is perfection accomplished. One becomes a siddha only by practical application [of yoga practices]. This is the actual truth.

The Sanskrit word *siddha* is used to describe a person who has "accomplished" the aim of yoga practice: spiritual enlightenment. In India and other parts of Asia it is common to see a member of a monastic order dressed in an ochre (for hindu swamis) or yellow (for buddhist monks) robe. Other body adornments may include prayer beads or bracelets. Some Western practitioners of yoga (and other spiritual disciplines) also wear unique items of clothing to indicate their dedication to the spiritual path or to impress others. The author of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* informs readers that what they do, and accomplish, is more important than external appearances.

– to be continued

Recommended Constructive Actions

Kriya initiates know the value of performing actions which will produce ideal results. Peruse the following recommendations and make decisive choices for yourself and for others:

• If you have not yet requested your copy of *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*, which was published in June, please do so now. This book, available only to kriya yoga initiates, will inform and motivate you on your awakening path.

• If you do not have a copy of *Surrendered Love, Redeeming Grace*, in which my experiences with Paramahansa Yogananda are described, request a copy now.

• Request free copies of *Truth Journal*; give them to individuals whom you know to be sincerely interested in effective living and spiritual growth. Also, request several copies of the new 48 page booklet *How to Live Consciously in God* to give to others.

• Participate in a retreat here next year: a regular program (June to August) or a private retreat in May. For optimum benefits, rest and meditate deeply when you are here. You will be physically, mentally, and emotionally renewed and spiritually enlivened.

• If you are not a CSA member, use the application form on page 31 of the September-October issue of *Truth Journal*. The more involved you are with this work and with me, the better your attunement will be. Your active participation will keep you focused and help make your spiritual practice more intentional.

• In early October we will send a CSA ministry Progress Report to everyone on our mailing list. Read it carefully and participate to the full extent of your ability to do so.

With endless blessings,

Program Schedules at CSA Headquarters

Reservations Required – Donation Basis
Let us Know If You Need Travel Directions

Weekend Retreats for Everyone
October 28 – 29 • November 25 – 26
Saturday 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday morning meditation at 10 a.m. Arrive Friday if convenient. Vegetarian meals will be served Saturday and breakfast Sunday morning.

Holy Season Meditation
Saturday, December 9, 10 a.m to 1 p.m. Dinner at 2 p.m
If arriving on Saturday but not staying overnight, inform us of your plans to be here.

Plan Ahead for the 2001 Programs:
Self-Transformation Retreats for Kriya Yoga Initiates
April 29 - May 4 • May 6 – 11 • May 13 – 18
Limited to 20 participants weekly. Stay for one, two, or three weeks. A private room in one of our guest houses. Arrive Saturday or Sunday. Prepare your own vegetarian meals.

Meditation at 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. A class on kriya yoga philosophy and practices at 7 a.m., following the morning meditation. Two hours of work-service daily. Free time for relaxation, study, and reflection.

For schedules of retreats from June to Labor Day, see the October issue of Transcendence Newsletter (page 4).

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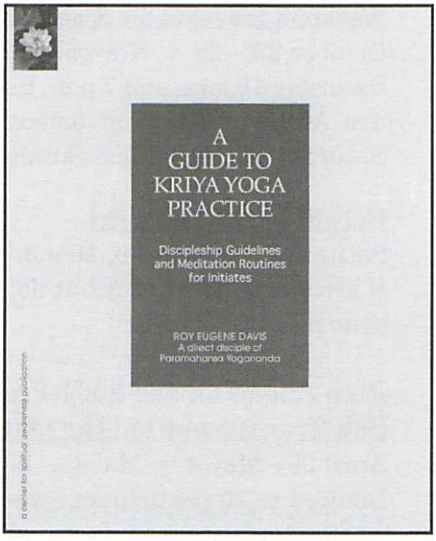
- An extensive glossary



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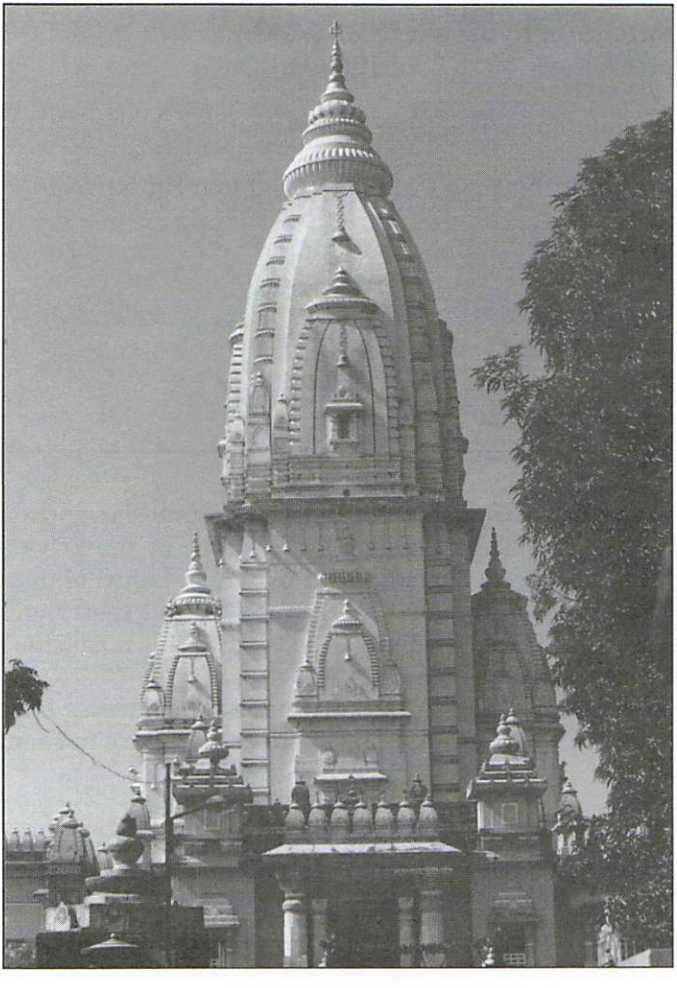
January – March 2001



INDIA PILGRIMAGE TOUR: OCTOBER, 2001
– *page 21*

One who [accurately] discerns the difference between the body, senses, mind, and the [true] Self is liberated. – *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 4:25*

As a lamp [flame] in a windless place does not waver, to such is compared the concentration of the meditator who, with mental impulses subdued, is established in practice of yoga [samadhi]. – *The Bhagavad Gita 6:19*

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Unless otherwise noted, the articles in *Radiance* magazine are written by Roy Eugene Davis for initiates in the kriya yoga tradition represented by Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, and their qualified successors. Initiated CSA members receive this magazine free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe.

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The Importance of Rationality, Consistency, and Perseverance on the Spiritual Path

rational Having or exercising the ability to think in an orderly, logical manner in accord with known facts.
consistent Conforming to the same principles or a course of actions.
perseverance Steadfast adherence to an ideal, belief, purpose, or course of actions.

Rational thinking, consistency in the performance of actions which produce desired results, and unwavering adherence to all that is of real value, are qualities which enhance our lives and enable us to be successful in worthy endeavors. Irrational thinking and behavior, regardless on one's good intentions or dedicated endeavors, can only result in misfortune. In regard to the latter course of action, in his essay, *Self-Reliance*, the nineteenth century New England "transcendentalist" Ralph Waldo Emerson* wrote: "A *foolish* [italics added] consistency is the hobgoblin† of little minds."

Obtain valid (well-reasoned and/or verified by analysis and experimentation) knowledge about your true relationship to the Infinite, the natural laws which determine the effects of causes, and how to live effectively, then conform your thinking and actions to it. Until your

---

*Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Henry David Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott, and several other original thinkers of their era were said to be transcendentalists because of the lofty philosophical idealism expressed in their conversations and writings. They, and a few of their friends, were avid readers of the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads, which had only recently been published in English. (A biographer revealed that Emerson was not fond of his middle name, Waldo.) The following comment by Louisa May Alcott was in a published collection of her letters and journals: "My definition [of a philosopher] is of a man up in a balloon, with his family and friends holding the ropes which confine him to earth and trying to haul him down."

†In folklore myth, a *hobgoblin* is described as a mischievous elf, an imaginary, small creature with magical powers, portrayed as delighting in teasing human beings.

knowledge is flawless and your actions are always wisdom-directed, continue to learn and to apply what you learn.

To acquire valid knowledge, and to be inspired and motivated, read the writings of spiritually enlightened souls and, whenever possible, listen to their words and experience the nonverbal blessing of their presence.

In my personal interactions with Paramahansa Yogananda (1949–1952), although his wise words were always helpful, I soon learned that when I was attuned to his state of consciousness and mental states (which he encouraged), I could have direct access to the contents of his consciousness and mind. Behind the facade of his stalwart physical form and attractive personality I discerned a cosmic presence and reality. On one occasion, he confided, "I vanquished Yogananda [identification with name and form] long ago; only God dwells here [in this body] now." *Note*: Vanquish: subdue, suppress, overcome.

Often obscured by the veils of matter and mind are realities which are more substantial than those which we ordinarily perceive through the senses or with the intellect. Physical realities are manifested by subtle element-influences (*tattvas*, true essences) emanated from the field of Primordial Nature (Om, the vibration of the power of Consciousness expressing as space-time and cosmic forces regulated by the three constituent attributes or *gunas*.

Note: see "The Categories and Processes of God's Cosmic Manifestation" in the first part of lesson three in *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*.

Discard the false belief that there is a separation between spiritual and material life. Perform your duties skillfully. All [constructive] work is purifying if done with the right motive. If you sometimes fail to accomplish your purposes, don't be discouraged; that is the best time to sow the seeds of success. In everything you do, express your soul qualities. – *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Manifest plainness. Embrace simplicity.
Reduce selfishness. Have few desires.
– *The Way of Lau-tzu (600 B.C.E.)*

Renew Your Commitment

Think rationally, remain consistent in the performance of duties, and persevere on the spiritual path.

1. Examine your life and improve it as necessary.
   Physical health: [ ] excellent [ ] good [ ] poor
   Habitual mental attitude: [ ] positive [ ] negative
   Habitual mental state: [ ] rational [ ] irrational
   Emotional states: [ ] balanced [ ] erratic
   Awareness: [ ] clear and serene [ ] blurred
   Financial status: [ ] satisfactory [ ] unsatisfactory
   Work that you do or service that you provide:
   [ ] enjoyable and fulfilling [ ] not enjoyable or fulfilling
   Relationships: [ ] supportive [ ] unreliable
   Behaviors: [ ] consistent [ ] variable
   Major purposes: [ ] of real value [ ] of minor importance
   Resolve to accomplish: [ ] strong [ ] medium [ ] weak

2. Write (on a separate sheet of paper or in your journal) what you need to (and will) do to make the necessary, positive changes. Do this when you are alone and quiet, after meditating for a few minutes to become calm and soul- and God-centered.

3. Write your reading and learning projects for the purpose of acquiring knowledge that will enable you to live more effectively and successfully.

_____

_____

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5. Review your meditation practices and routines:
   Also read *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice*, *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*, and *The Eternal Way*.

Dialogue

The Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are requested by readers. Please use the form provided with each issue to participate. Share your thoughts and needs for the benefit of others who peruse these pages.

I often feel strong dislike toward members of religious organizations that claim to possess the "only" truth. Sometimes I can't help being confused when hearing their views. How can I avoid these feelings?

Ignore the words of unintelligent, unenlightened people.

Which is easier: to practice kriya yoga in the physical, or astral, realm?

Kriya yoga (ethical, disciplined living, and meditation) can be most easily practiced when and where one chooses to do it. Physical and astral realms coexist; we may be more aware of the physical realm, yet we also express through an astral body (or soul sheath). Kriya pranayama is actually an astral practice (because of flows of life force and chakra enlivening) that also produces transformative physical effects. If your question is in regard to whether or not kriya yoga is easier to practice after one departs from the physical realm: it will be determined by the state of awareness. If one is confused in the astral realm, kriya practices will not be easy, just as practice is not easy in this realm when confusion prevails.

I have heard that Paramahansa Yogananda told his disciples, "If you are faithful on this path to the end (of your earth life), when you go, I, or one of the gurus will be there to usher you into the Infinite." Can you explain more about this?

He said this to me during one my private visits with him at his retreat house in Twenty Nine Palms, California, in the early 1950s.

How is this possible, and how can we know that we will have such help and guidance at that time? For me, my guru's words are sufficient. A fully illumined master of yoga, he spoke from his own inner realization and personal experience.

We cannot know which of the gurus (or other saints of our kriya tradition), will be with us when we make our transition from the body

because we do not know where they are now. Lahiri Mahasaya left his body in 1895; Sri Yukteswar departed in 1936; Paramahansa Yogananda did so in 1952. We should not think that they are merely residing in the celestial realms waiting for us to summon them when leave this world. They may have other things to do: they may reincarnate, or may transcend the subtle astral and finer causal realms.

To leave the body (at the appropriate time), a kriya initiate can meditatively withdraw awareness from external objects, the senses, emotions, and mental processes, and go through the spinal pathway, upward to the spiritual eye and crown chakra, while aspiring to experience clear awareness and the reality of the wholeness of God. The supportive influences that are needed will then be provided.

The best preparation for eventual transition is to live an orderly, wholesome life, cultivate the virtues, and meditate superconsciously on a regular schedule. Right living results in psychological health that eliminates mental and emotional confusion. Superconscious meditation results in Self- and God-realization and enables us to explore inner realms of consciousness while embodied.

Since God is the sole creator, I don't understand how there can be dual aspects of pure consciousness.

Pure consciousness is not dual; pure consciousness emanates a field of consciousness with attributes (the three gunas) and from that the power of consciousness is projected as the Om vibration. Duality has only to do with relative phenomena; the absolute (pure) aspect of consciousness remains unmodified. Review the processes of cosmic manifestation in *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. If at first you are not able to comprehend the explanation, continue to ponder it until insight dawns, as it eventually will.

Regarding the yamas (refraining from unethical or immoral behaviors): is there a difference between truthfulness and honesty?

A dictionary definition of *honest* includes "characterized by or exhibiting truthfulness or integrity." An honest person is truthful; a truthful person is honest.

Which hatha yoga asanas are considered to be most useful to practice? (Bottom of page 17, Oct.-Dec. 2000 *Radiance.*]

Different teachers have their preferences. It is more useful to practice a few basic asanas in a meditative mood than to be overly concerned about variety or go to extremes. Rather than be too focused on hatha yoga regimens, do them for the benefits that can be derived, and expand your awareness. In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* the following postures, which provide a satisfactory routine, are described (with a few variations):

Swastikasana, auspicious; gomukhasana, cow face; virasana, hero; kurmasana, tortoise; kukkutasana, cockeral; uttarkurmasana, stretched tortoise; dhanurasana, bow; matsyendrasana, half spinal twist [in both directions]; paschimottanasana, forward bend back stretch; mayurasana, peacock; savasana, corpse; siddhasana, seated posture of the spiritually accomplished; padmasana, lotus; simhasana, lion; bhadrasana, gracious.

I am not certain that I am practicing kriya pranayama correctly. Can you provide more details that might be helpful?

These (only slightly edited) instructions, in a booklet prepared by my guru which was given to persons who attended his classes, will be helpful:

The purpose of Kriya [pranayama practice] is to magnetize the spine by circulating life current in and around it, thereby withdrawing the life current from the senses and involuntary organs and concentrating it in the spine. This also helps to change the center of consciousness from the body and senses to the spine.

The spinal column should be imagined as hollow when circulating the life current lengthwise in and around it.

1. With eyes [and attention] focused at the will center [spiritual eye between the eyebrows in the front region of the brain], concentrate on the spinal column; imagine it to be a hollow tube running from the point between the eyebrows to the base of the spine.

2. Inhale, feeling the breath moving through the inside of the imaginary hollow spinal canal, with the sound of "aw" [in the throat], feeling a cool breath and current starting from the coccyx, moving upward until it reaches the top of the tube, going to the point between the eyebrows. The duration of inhalation should be ten to fifteen counts. [Mental counting—1,2,3,4,5, etc.—more fully involves attention with the process.]

When the current and breath have reached the top of the spinal tube,

the point between the eyebrows [pause momentarily], slowly exhale, sending the breath and current over the forehead, through the cerebrum, and on down the back of the spinal column to the coccyx. While exhaling, feel the current as a fine, threadlike, tepid (slightly warm) stream slowly going over the spine downward to the coccyx. As you exhale, imagining the current to flow downward over the back of the spine, make the sound of "E" with the breath.

When you inhale and exhale [using this technique], oxygen is quickly converted into life force, especially recharging the lungs and blood. Focusing the vision and will at the point between the eyebrows, and imagining the circulation of the current and breath in and around the spine, will create a positive and negative pole and bring about the actual circulation of this current.

The breath does not actually circulate in and around the spine; the increased life force is directed by will and visualization to continuously circulate through and around the spinal pathway. The five senses are thus disconnected and attention is freed from invasion by the senses.

Keep the throat expanded when practicing [kriya pranayama], like that which is experienced when the tongue is rolled back toward the uvula. You may practice with the tongue rolled back.

You may also practice in the following way. While drawing the cool current upward, mentally chant Om at each of the six centers in the spine [and at the spiritual eye]. During exhalation, mentally chant Om at each center as the warm current flows downward. (From *Art of Super-Realization: Initiation;* Swami Yogananda, 1930, Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society, Los Angeles, Calif.)

Paramahansa also recommended that the throat be lubricated with ghee or olive oil before practicing kriya pranayama.

The sounds ("aw" and "e") are the quiet sounds that normally occur when inhaling and exhaling air through the throat during kriya pranayama practice.

Pause for a moment after inhalation and after exhalation. New initiates should do 14 continuous repetitions, experimenting until a natural rhythm is established, which is neither too fast nor too slow. With the last inhalation, pull the current into the brain and spiritual eye, hold it there, disregard the breath, and sit for a while in the deep

silence. Then practice jyoti mudra and again sit in the deep silence, focused at the spiritual eye and crown chakra, listening to Om.

Once the process is known, diligent, gentle, patient practice will elicit (bring forth) satisfying results.

Initiates who have been practicing kriya pranayama for a year or more may increase the number of repetitions, as many times as may be desired so long as practice is easy and enjoyable. Strain, or inattentive, mechanical practice should be avoided.

Do the gurus in our kriya yoga tradition ever ask for or accept money, or anything else, for instruction or for initiation?

The teachers in our tradition do not sell their knowledge or their services or blessings. A person who requests instruction and/or initiation should want to learn, have the capacity to learn, and be willing to practice what is taught. A donation of some kind, to be used for charitable purposes, may be requested by the teacher. This is said to "purify" the student's mind and awareness. By freely giving for a worthy purpose, the student demonstrates willingness to be of service to others. Lahiri Mahasaya asked new initiates to donate 5 rupees (Indian dollars), which were later sent to Babaji in the foothills of Himalayas, who had some of his disciples use it to provide social or religious services for the people who lived in the villages of that region. Food was distributed, some small temples were built, and religious ceremonies were conducted at public gatherings.

In the 1920s, Paramahansa Yogananda lectured in many major cities in America to large audiences on a donation basis. A fee of $25 was asked for the series of five evening classes that were presented after the public lectures. The money was used to pay the costs of renting an auditorium and newspaper advertisements that attracted the students. I am sure that sincere individuals who could not afford that amount (a considerable sum for the average working person of that era) were allowed to donate in accord with their available means or were invited to attend free. While students and initiated disciples are encouraged to support, as needed, a guru's teaching endeavors, it should be understood that there can be no material compensation for what the guru teaches (and may silently transmit in accord with the disciple's intellectual and spiritual receptivity). If a student does not have much

money, useful service of some kind can be selflessly performed for the benefit of someone or for the public good. One who is intent on the spiritual path should learn to generously give as well as to receive.

Emulating the example of the gurus of our kriya yoga tradition, I teach freely. A donation is accepted for the ministry; not for my personal use. All who cannot afford to donate are warmly welcomed and generously served. God is the source of all good and the only real doer of worthwhile deeds.

I enjoy my sadana (spiritual practice), however, I am becoming "otherworldly." I prefer to think about metaphysical ideas and spiritual growth possibilities most of the time and am not overly interested in ordinary, mundane matters. Is this normal? If not, how can I be more balanced?

It is good (beneficial) to enjoy spiritual practice and to always be aware of our relationship to the Infinite. It is also important to live wisely and effectively. Yes, it is normal for a devotee of God not to be overly attracted to matters which appeal to people whose lives are determined by their whims and conditioned tendencies.

Continue your spiritual practices. Cultivate Self-awareness and awareness of God's presence. Appropriately relate to others. Focus your attention and actions on activities and projects which are of real value. Learn to live freely and enjoyably in the world without strong attachments or aversions. Remember that the reality of God extends fully to this earth plane.

A *meta*physical ("beyond" the physical) understanding enables us to intellectually and intuitively comprehend the wholeness of life: to know that one Consciousness is expressing as everything. We can then easily choose to relate to all that is wholesome and spiritually elevating while disregarding what is not. People who are not yet spiritually awake, or whose aspiration to spiritual growth is not yet fervent, are inclined to allow their habits, moods, and self-centered desires to rule their lives. Allow others the right and freedom to live their lives in accord with their choices or their fate (karmic influences).

> At the spiritual eye, the light of God shines. This is the inner door that leads the soul's awareness into the realm of the divine glory of God. God dwells in each person, and can be known when one enters the sanctuary of pure, illumined consciousness. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

Commentary

Hatha Yoga Pradipika
(Light on Hatha Yoga)

Continued from the previous issue: Chapter One

67. Asanas, breath-retention, and other hatha yoga procedures should all be practiced until success in raja yoga is accomplished.

In this verse the author specifically asserts that hatha yoga practice should be considered as a preparation and foundation for raja yoga practice that culminates in samadhi. *Asanas* are the various postures. Breath retention (kevala-kumbhaka) is done with intention during some pranayama practice (see verses 7–11, below); it may occur naturally after practice of kriya pranayama, or at other times when the mind is calm and concentration is unwavering.

Chapter Two

1. Being established in asana practice, with the senses controlled and having a beneficial diet, one should practice pranayama as instructed by the guru.

Note the conditions which are recommended prior to practicing pranayama routines: to have some skill in asana practice (at least be able to sit poised and still in a comfortable meditation posture); be able to regulate sense impulses; have a nourishing diet; and receive personal instruction from one's guru (teacher). The teacher should be an accomplished practitioner of what is taught.

2. When prana is restless, the mind is not steady. When prana is calm, the mind [and thus awareness] is tranquil. Therefore, the yogi should regulate prana.

Lahiri Mahasaya wrote: "Mental restlessness is an indication of restless prana." The great value of right practice of pranayama is that it enables the meditator to acquire conscious control over vital forces (prana), the senses, and mental processes.

3. When prana remains in the body, the body is alive. When prana departs, death occurs. Therefore, acquire mastery of prana.

The relationship between breath and life force is discerned by observation. Our word "spirit" is from Latin *spiritus*, breath, from the word *spirare*, to breathe. Yogis who are intent on liberation of consciousness know the value of healthy, long life—which can be experienced as the result of right thinking, right living, and unique practices, some of which are described in this text. The aim of the dedicated yogi is to avoid premature transition from the body and to stop the cycles of *unwanted* physical births and deaths which, it is believed, spiritually unenlightened people are fated to experience (until they awaken to a degree of Self-knowledge that removes them from the influences of karma and cosmic forces.)

4. When the nadis [prana channels] are impure, prana does not move in sushumna nadi. How, then, can yoga be accomplished?
5. When the nadis are purified, the yogi can effectively practice pranayama.

Life forces circulate through subtle channels which pervade the physical body. According to yoga teachers, these channels can be purified by certain pranayama practices. Prana will then move freely in the central spinal pathway (sushumna, "the path of God" or "the radiant path"). The left (ida, lunar) and right (pingala, solar) prana currents are harmonized and a surge of ascending life force enlivens the chakras and flows to the higher brain centers. As flows of life force (shakti) in the sushumna become more dynamic, the full, transformative power of kundalini (dormant soul force in the lower chakras) becomes expressive.

A pranayama technique enables the practitioner to eventually experience spontaneous, unrestrained (*ayama*) flows of prana.

6. With sattvic influences dominant in the mind, pranayama should be daily practiced until sushumna nadi is purified.

Sattvic (pure, elevating, redemptive) mental influences should motivate one's practice of pranayama. One's purpose should be to acquire mastery over the senses and mind, concentrate effectively, medi

tate skillfully, and rapidly, progressively awaken through the stages of spiritual growth to full illumination of consciousness. The real purpose of yoga practice is not to enable a person to experience a glorified human condition; it is to clarify one's awareness so that all delusions and illusions are absent.

7. Sitting in padmasana [or any comfortable meditation posture] one should inhale through the left nostril, pause, then exhale through the right nostril.
8. Then, inhale through the right nostril, pause, and exhale through the left nostril.
9. Air should be inhaled through the same nostril through which it was exhaled. The speed of breathing should be moderately slow, and not forceful.
10. When pranayama is practiced like this, the nadis will be purified in less than three months.
11. Practice this pranayama four times daily—early morning, midday, early evening, and midnight—gradually increasing the number of pranayamas up to eighty times for each practice session.
12. During the first stage [of practice] the body perspires; during the second stage tremors are felt [throughout the body]; during the final stage prana flows to the crown chakra.

This pranayama (*nadi-shodhana*, prana channel purification) is usually recommended as the first pranayama practice for new yoga students. Closing the right nostril with a finger, air is smoothly inhaled through the left nostril, restrained for a few moments, then closing the left nostril, smoothly exhaled through the right nostril. Air is then inhaled through the right nostril, restrained for a few moments, then, closing the right nostril, it is smoothly exhaled through the left nostril. This is one cycle or round. Novice practitioners can begin with ten rounds, gradually increasing the number of rounds according to one's comfort and capacity to practice—which is never forceful.

The four times a day schedule is for advanced practitioners; two or three times a day is more usual.

To improve concentration, one may visualize a brilliant, full moon in the spiritual eye when air is moving through the left nostril and a flame of fire when air is moving through the right nostril. These influences are related to the left and right prana channels.

One may, or may not, perspire during advanced practice. Likewise, tremors may, or may not, be experienced. If discomfort is felt, the practice session should be concluded. When the nadis have been purified, there will be no physical symptoms or discomfort during practice. Then, when meditating after the practice session, prana shakti (the energy of kundalini) will spontaneously flow upward through sushumna nadi.

13. Rub the perspiration into the skin; the body will become firm and bright.

If the body perspires when practicing pranayama or asanas, or at any other time, massaging it into the skin has a cleansing and smoothing effect.

14. When starting pranayama practice, it is recommended that milk and ghee be included in the diet until one is established in practice.

Milk was recommended because it was a readily available source of nutrition. If you are a strict vegetarian or if milk is not tolerated by your body, it can be avoided. Ghee (clarified butter) is recommended in ayurvedic literature as a "nerve food" and as a vehicle to transport nutrients (especially herbal essences) into the deep tissues of the body.

To clarify butter: In a heavy pot, over medium high heat, bring one pound of unsalted butter to a slow simmer. Being attentive, let it gently simmer. Froth will come to the top, then milk solids will be observed, which will sink to the bottom of the pot and turn brown. When a drop of water sprinkled on the simmering oil makes a popping or crackling sound, remove the pot from the stove. It will be golden color and have a pleasant fragrance. Let the ghee cool for a few minutes, then strain it through folded cheesecloth into another pot or glass jar. It will solidify when it cools. It can be stored at room temperature, or refrigerated. Use it to saute (lightly fry) vegetables, spread it thinly on bread, or put a modest amount on cooked vegetables or rice. (A small pea-size portion of ghee can be put on the back of the tongue and gently swallowed to lubricate the throat prior to kriya pranayama practice. Or use olive oil.)

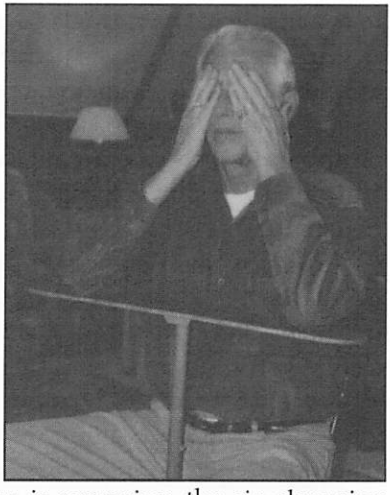
15. Just as an untamed animal may be gradually controlled, so prana can be controlled. Otherwise, one may be harmed.

16. By proper practice of pranayama, all diseases are eliminated. If pranayama is not practiced properly, discomfort may arise.
17. Headache, pain in the eyes or ears, or other signs of discomfort may be due to disturbances of flows of prana in the body.
18. Air should be skillfully inhaled, exhaled, and retained. Perfection [siddhi] in practice is thus accomplished.
19. When the nadis are purified, the external indications are physical leanness and the glow of health.
20. When prana can be easily controlled, digestive powers increase. When the nadis are purified, one is free from disease and inner sound [spontaneously] manifests.

When flows of prana are erratic, or the doshas (subtle cosmic influences that govern physiological processes) are not balanced, physical and/or psychological disturbance may occur. When vital forces flow freely and the three governing principles (vata, pitta, kapha) are balanced, physical illness does not occur, thinking is orderly and rational, emotions are balanced, ideal body weight is easily maintained, and the immune system remains strong. *Ojas* (refined, spiritualized consciousness-energy, the final stage of food transformation) vitalizes the mind and body.

Inner sound (nada, or shabda), can be more easily heard when prana moves in the sushumna pathway. Om, the vibration of the power of Consciousness, is the second cosmic manifestation of Consciousness. When meditating, one can listen in the inner ear (and inside and around the head) to discern subtle sounds. At first, the sound of air in the ear canals may be heard, then subtle sounds of element-influences emanating from the chakras: like restless bees at the base chakra; the sound of a harp at the second chakra; a flutelike sound at the third chakra; the peal of a gong at the fourth chakra; the sound of an ocean at the fifth chakra; and pure sounds at the spiritual eye and crown chakra.

These sounds may be "listened to" while sitting in an ordinary meditation posture. If an armrest is used, the eyes can be covered with the palms of the hands and the ears closed with the thumbs. This enjoyable practice isolates awareness, prevents external light and sounds from intruding, and helps to focus attention. Inner light may be "looked for" (or observed if easily seen) in the spiritual eye and/or crown chakra while listening to inner sound.



Using an armrest while contemplating inner sound and light. *See page 22.*

21. When one is overweight or if mucus is excessive, the six cleansing processes should be done before starting pranayama practice. If the mind-body constitution is balanced, these may not be necessary.
22. The six cleansing actions are: stomach cleansing; colon cleansing; nasal cleansing; steady gazing; uddiyana bandha and variations of it; and a "skull brightening" pranayama practice.

Refer to the October-December, 2000, issue of Radiance, page 19, for information about uddiyana bandha. The six cleansing actions (shat-karmas) described in verses 12–40, are as follows.

For cleansing the stomach, an extreme method is to swallow a long strip of cloth, let it absorb mucus and stomach fluids, then extract it (this is not recommended). One may drink a quart or more of warm salt water, then expel it. If doing this is too extreme or unpleasant, one can fast for a day or two and drink quantities of fresh (or distilled) water, perhaps flavored with fresh fruit juice.

A warm water enema can be used to cleanse the colon.

To cleanse the nasal passages and encourage sinus drainage, luke-warm water (slightly more than body temperature) in which a pinch of salt has been stirred can be gently poured into one nostril and then the other. Small neti (nasal wash) pots, with a spout similar to that of a tea pot, are available from various sources. When the nasal passages have been cleansed, a light coating of sesame oil can be applied with a finger

to the inside of the nostrils to prevent dryness.

Steady gazing can be practiced for a few minutes by looking gently at a candle flame, or gazing at a distant object, such as the horizon, an ocean, or slow moving clouds. To wash the eyes one can gaze without blinking until tears emerge. Because steady gazing improves concentration, it is said to be helpful in cultivating powers of extrasensory perception.

Practice of uddiyana bandha, and its variations, enlivens the solar plexus and the actions of the third (fire element influence) chakra, improves digestive powers and functions of organs in the abdominal cavity, and stimulates peristalsis (wavelike muscular contractions that push matter through the alimentary canal).

The "skull brightening" procedure, a pranayama which affects the front region of head, is practiced by quickly expelling the breath (through the nostrils) and letting inhalation naturally occur. Several (10 to 20) expulsions and automatic inhalations can be done.

41. When the nadis and chakras are purified by pranayama practice, life forces open the entrance of sushumna and enter into it.
42. Prana flowing smoothly in sushumna makes the mind tranquil.
43. By practicing the various restraints of prana, a variety of powers of accomplishment (siddhis) may be acquired. Those who know the restraints, practice them to become accomplished.

The Sanskrit word kumbhaka (potlike) can mean restraint or regulation of breathing when practicing pranayama or the retention of breath (and prana) that may result. In the latter sense, the term is used to refer to the fact that when prana is retained, the body is filled with life force as a pot retains liquid. Breath and prana retention is of two kinds: that which occurs during the course of pranayama practice (the natural pause after inhalation and exhalation); that which may be sustained after pranayama practice or during deep meditation. The former is said to encourage the awakening and upward movement of kundalini energies; the latter impels them to flow to the crown chakra.

44. The eight restraints are surabheda [sun-piercing]; ujjayi [victorious]; seetkari [hissing]; sheetali [cooling]; bhastrika [bellows]; bharamari [humming of a bee]; moorcha [swoon or faintness]; plavini [floating].

These practices are described in verses 45–70. I do not explain them here because they should be privately learned from one's teacher, and then only when it will be useful for the student to practice them. For most kriya initiates, occasional practice of alternate nostril breathing and regular kriya pranayama (and the supplemental kriya meditation techniques) are sufficient.

71. Inhalation, exhalation, and breath retention are the three parts of pranayama practice. Breath retention is of two kinds: related to active pranayama practice and not related to active practice.

The first kind of breath retention is regulated: there is a momentary pause after inhalation and exhalation. The second kind occurs without effort when prana flows freely in sushumna.

72. Until breath retention is spontaneous, one should regulate it.
73. Perfection of natural retention is without external breathing.

After practice of kriya pranayama, breathing may be very subtle or it may cease for a few moments. When breathing is subtle, or is not discernible, notice that thoughts are absent (or not dominant) and awareness is clear.

74. There is nothing in this or other realms that cannot be obtained by one who is accomplished in breathlessness.
75. By this, the state of raja yoga also results, kundalini is aroused, sushumna is purified, and hatha yoga is perfected.

The clarity that is experienced when awareness is disconnected from (or no longer strongly identified with) the five senses and mental processes, and kundalini is influential, enables the meditator to experience superconscious states, then to transcend them. As the chakras are enlivened by the actions of kundalini energies and soul awareness becomes more expansive, powers of perception improve and sattvic (illuminating) influences purify the mind.

76. There can be no perfection [final accomplishment] if hatha yoga is practiced without raja yoga or if raja yoga is practiced without hatha yoga. By practice of both, perfection results.

The culmination of skillful hatha yoga practice is merging of the lunar and solar currents of prana which results in the calming of mental changes (vrittis) and the pacification of subliminal impulses (vasanas) which activate them. Raja (regal or royal) yoga practice culminates in mastery of the senses, mental and emotional states, and states of awareness. Integration of the most useful practices of all of the yogic systems, in accord with one's need, psychological temperament, and ability and capacity to practice is recommended.

77. When [erratic] flows of prana cease, the mind becomes free from all modifications. One then accomplishes raja yoga.

Memorize and contemplate the meaning and the significance of sutra two, chapter one, in Patanjali's yoga-sutras:

yoga-chitta-vritti-nirodha
samadhi-individualized awareness-mental modification-restraint

Samadhi (oneness-realization) with or without the support of an object of perception is experienced when mental modifications cease to be influential. They may cease to be influential because of being resisted and restrained by intentional endeavor or when attention and awareness are disconnected from them.

78. Indications of accomplished hatha yoga practice are leanness of the body, tranquil demeanor, manifestation of inner sound, clear eyes, excellent health, control of vital forces, strong powers of digestion, and purification of the prana channels.

When some, or all, of these indications are evident, one's yoga practices are appropriate and effective. One should be healthy and vital, neither excessively thin nor excessively overweight.

– to be continued.

INDIA PILGRIMAGE: OCTOBER 2001
FOR CSA MEMBER KRIYA YOGA INITIATES

I will visit India in October to lecture in New Delhi, Bombay, and Bangalore, sponsored by Motilal Banarsidass, the publisher of my books in that country. A pilgrimage group tour is being arranged. You may request information about it now.

Schedule (18 days)

By air to Frankfurt, Germany, rest overnight, and go to New Delhi. A tour bus will take our group to Rishikesh in the foothills of the Himalayas, the site of many ashrams and temples. Then by bus to Nainital, and to Ranikhet, the region where Lahiri Mahasaya was initiated by Babaji, in 1861. Returning to New Delhi, our group will fly to Bangalore in the south of India. A few days later, the final stop will be Bombay. This pilgrimage tour is only for CSA members who are kriya initiates. Please do not encourage others to go who may want to travel with us.

Jack Johnston, who traveled with our first two pilgrimage tours, will again be the guide. Only deluxe hotels will be used. Our local travel agency will handle the details. All information regarding costs, passports, visas, and other matters will be provided, as well as recommendations for being comfortable while in India.

Note: If you live in Europe or Africa, you may join the group tour in Frankfurt. If you are making your own arrangements from any city or country, you may join the group in New Delhi.

My main purpose for going (for the 6th time since 1972) is to meet with and serve spiritually inclined persons. I will be with our tour group as my schedule permits.

NEWS

MEDITATION ARMREST AVAILABLE NOW (illustrated on page 17)

The horizontal armrest bar is nicely finished. The vertical support rod can be adjusted for comfort. Instructions for use will be included. Order for $30 plus $4.00 shipping: $34.00 total. Outside the U.S., the shipping cost for airmail is $9.00. Use the enclosed response form, or fax or e-mail with credit card information. If attending a retreat program here, you may purchase a meditation armrest in our bookstore.

HATHA YOGA WITH NORMA CHIROLLA ...

... *An Introductory Hatha Yoga Session for Home Practice* is the title of a 55 minute video cassette now in our bookstore. Norma is the founder of Yoga Institute of Atlanta, a CSA minister, and often teaches morning hatha yoga classes at our retreats.
Price: $20, plus $4.00 for packing and postage.

SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT BROCHURES AND POSTERS

Your assistance in helping to publicize my early 2001 seminars in Florida, California, and New York will be appreciated. Request printed brochures to give to friends, put in book and health food stores, or distribute where they may be seen by persons interested in spiritual growth. Posters are also available.

Please specify how many you can immediately distribute. Use the enclosed response form, or telephone, fax, or e-mail.

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CSA members who are kriya initiates receive Radiance free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe. In the U.S., 6.00 for one year, 4 issues; outside the U.S., $10.00, includes airmail postage. The easiest way to remain current is to either be a CSA member or renew your subscription during January of each calendar year.

> When rested by [kriya] pranayama practice, the nervous system is refreshed. If one daily rests the nervous system in this way, the body is vitalized. Life and death come under the control of the yogi who perseveres in the practice of [kriya] pranayama. – *Sri Yukteswar*

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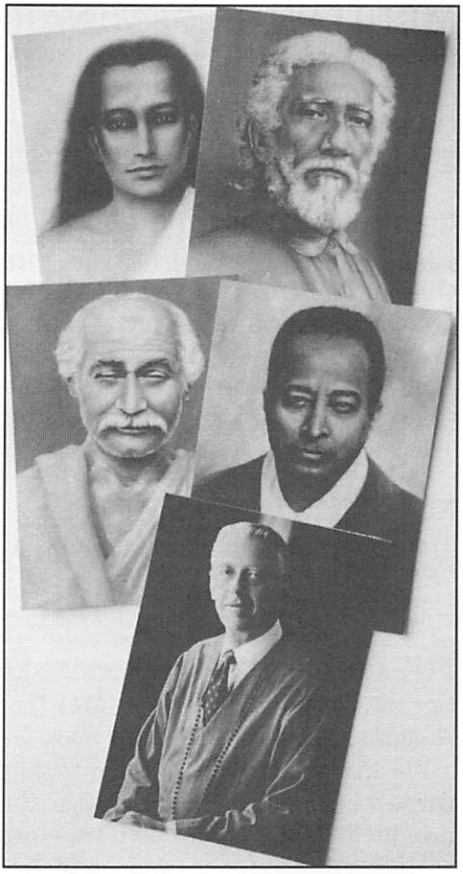

Paramahansa Yogananda and Mahavatar Babaji
From original oil paintings by a California artist.

Lahiri Mahasaya and Sri Yukteswar
From original acrylic paintings by CSA member Margot Bergman.

Roy Eugene Davis
Photograph by Sandy Kumler, Fine Arts Studio, Michigan

MEDITATION SEMINARS — Donation Basis

Reservations Recommended. Kriya initiation after each seminar.

Orlando, Florida: Sunday, February 11, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Marriott Hotel (downtown), 400 West Livingston Street

Costa Mesa, California: Sunday, March 18, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Holiday Inn, 3131 South Bristol Street
One-half mile west of Orange County / John Wayne Airport,
off 405 Freeway, near South Coast Plaza.

San Jose, California: Saturday, March 24, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Center for Spiritual Enlightenment, 1146 University Avenue
Telephone (408) 283-0221, Fax (408) 283-1722, E-mail: CSE@best.com

New York City: Sunday, April
Time and Location to be Announced

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Regular summer retreat schedules are published in *Truth Journal* and *Transcendence* newsletter.

Radiance

A Quarterly Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

April – June 2001

Meditation on Om culminates in knowledge of its meaning and in Self- and God-realization. – *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 1:28*

For the wise devotee who aspires to samadhi, action [spiritual practice] is the means [used to accomplish it]; for the devotee who has mastered samadhi, tranquility is the means [which results in liberation].

– *The Bhagavad Gita 6:3*

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Unless otherwise noted, the articles in *Radiance* magazine are written by Roy Eugene Davis for initiates in the kriya yoga tradition represented by Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, and their qualified successors. Initiated CSA members receive this magazine free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe.

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How to Remain Steadfast on the Spiritual Path

steadfast Old English *stede*, place + *fast*, fixed). Constant, unchanging.

From the depths of your being ask, "Why am I in this world?" If you intuitively "listen," you will know the answer. You are here to learn, grow to emotional and spiritual maturity, and awaken to complete Self- and God-realization and liberation of consciousness. While you are doing this, you should render useful, selfless service in accord with your capacity to do so.

Useful service is that which is of value to others, nature, and the trend of evolution. It should be performed *selflessly*, without need or expectation of recognition or reward. If the service you render is the work for which you are paid money, the material compensation, though necessary, is of secondary importance. Do not expect God to reward you for the good works that you perform. To do so would foster the illusion (mistaken perception) that you are separate from God. The truth is, God is individualized and expressing as you. Belief that you are "other than" or separated from God is a major obstacle to Self-knowledge.

The benefits that you will surely experience as results of selfless performance of useful duties will be:

- Purification of the ego: your sense of I-ness or individuality. When the ego is purified, your sense of individuality will not contract or confine your awareness.
- Clarification and enlargement of awareness.
- Insight into your relationship with the Infinite.
- More obvious support of the forces of nature and awareness of being a part of the wholeness of life.
- Freedom because of having transcended the ordinary human conscious condition.

While it is, of course, permissible to satisfy natural urges and experience mental, emotional, and (sometimes) physical grati-

fication because of having wholesome desires fulfilled, avoid thinking and behaving as if you were "only human." The human role that you are playing is temporary; sooner or later it will end. When it does, what will be your state of consciousness and your circumstances? Will you have accomplished the ultimate purpose for having been born into this world? I pray that you will.

Decide what is important and necessary. Decide how much time and energy you are going to devote to self-care routines to maintain your health and well-being, metaphysical study, meditation, family and social interactions, and work (service). Be disciplined. Allow some time for pleasure and recreation, but avoid circumstances and relationships that may distract you from your goals or cause you to waste your resources. Live with conscious intention; direct your attention and actions first to matters of importance. My guru often said, "By focused endeavor you can concentrate (bring together, attract toward a common center) your experiences and thereby quicken your spiritual evolution." It can be helpful to write a list of your priorities and either eliminate (or at least minimize) projects and activities which are not essential or are of little value.

Remember the four primary aims of life to be fulfilled: to find your right place in life (where you best fit in and can most efficiently and effectively function) and adhere to it; to have your life-enhancing desires easily satisfied; to have sufficient material resources for your comfort and to be successful in your endeavors; to be Self-realized and liberated. Don't think that you will have more time and be better able to concentrate on spiritual practices after you have satisfied your material needs or have retired from work. Cultivate spiritual awareness while doing other necessary things.

Lead me from the unreal to the Real.
Lead me from darkness [ignorance] to light [knowledge].
Lead me from [belief in] death to [awareness of] immortality.
– *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*

Prioritize Your Life

priority Latin *prior*, first. **1.** Precedence, especially established by order of importance or urgency. **2.** Something that merits or is worthy of immediate attention.

Write a list of projects and activities which are of real value to you. Devote most of your energies and resources to them.

Write a list of projects and activities which are of minor importance. Either eliminate or consider them to be of secondary importance.

Paramahansa Yogananda – *(circa 1948)*

Dialogue

The Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are requested by readers. Please use the form provided with each issue to participate. Share your thoughts and needs for the benefit of others who peruse these pages.

Is Self-inquiry a form of meditation?

To become aware of what you really are is the primary purpose of meditation practice. If you use a technique to calm the mind, when the mind is calm and awareness is more clear, contemplate the essence of your being as pure consciousness. At first, this may be an intellectual process as you gently endeavor to discern the difference between what you are and ordinary, modified states of awareness. Then it becomes intuitive—which results in direct knowing and experience (realization). Self-inquiry can also be practiced at times other when formally meditating. For this, sit still with eyes open or closed, pondering, "What is my real nature?" Sooner or later, there will be a spontaneous shift of viewpoint, from examining what you are to knowing what you are. There is no need to tell anyone that you know what you are; live in accord with that realization.

Some people say that addiction to alcohol (or to other substances or behaviors) is a "spiritual disease." Is there any truth to this?

All personal, human problems can be considered as such. When one is fully spiritually aware, these problems are absent. While temporary solutions may be found to be helpful (replacing harmful habits with wholesome habits, making better choices, and using will power to avoid debilitating behaviors), Self- and God-realization is the permanent "cure."

How does a guru or spiritually aware person "empower" a place. How is a person enlivened by such a place?

A spiritually aware person may manifest refined frequencies of energy in an environment by his or her presence, meditating or praying, performing a meaningful ritual, or chanting man-

tras. When a receptive person is in that environment, mental calmness and an enlivening of their soul forces occurs. Even a person who is not receptive and who may not feel anything different or special, is benefited at a subtle level. The environment where you live, work, and meditate can be "spiritualized" by your idealistic thoughts and clear states of awareness. If you have a special place set aside only for meditation practice, when you go there the supportive energies (and your memories of past enjoyable meditation experiences) can help you to immediately elicit (bring forth) a superconscious state.

When I practice kriya pranayama, my throat gets sore, I experience a ringing sound in my ears, and feel light-headed. What can I do to avoid these reactions?

You may be practicing too aggressively. Do it slow and easy. Lubricate your throat with a small quantity of olive oil before practicing. (Put it on the back of the tongue and let it run down into the throat, to moisten it). If you can practice with your mouth closed, breathing through your nose but still with the "suction" effect in the throat, do it that way. Slow (at a rate that is comfortable) and easy practice should solve your problems.

Remember that a meditation technique is like any other "tool" we use for a specific purpose. Learn to use it, use it skillfully for the intended purpose, then discard it when it is no longer necessary. Avoid overconcern about insignificant details: comparing how different teachers teach a meditation technique or whether using it one way is better than another. When you learn a helpful meditation technique from a knowledgeable person, use it until your practice is proficient, then go beyond it. When meditating, fervent aspiration and devotion are as important as practice of a useful technique.

Although I do not like to identify myself with a religion, I know that many people prefer to do so. Can a person practice kriya yoga without being a member of a religious group?

The basic kriya yoga practices (moral, self-disciplined living; study to know the reality of one's true Self and God; and purification of the ego) are common to many spiritual paths. One need

not affiliate with an organized religious body to adhere to these guidelines. If one chooses to be a member of an organized religious body, kriya yoga practices will provide a firm foundation and contribute to more rapid spiritual growth.

The following definitions are from *Webster's Dictionary*:

> **religion** **1. a.** Belief in and reverence for a supernatural power as the creator and governor of the universe. **b.** A specific unified system of expression of this belief. **2.** The spiritual or emotional attitude of one who recognizes the existence of a supernatural power. **3.** An objective or ideal pursued with fervor or conscientious devotion.

Religious beliefs and practices need not be orthodox (conformed to a traditional belief system). What is true should be acknowledged and accepted; what is not true can and should be ignored. Any external religious rituals that one chooses to perform, if they are helpful, can be maintained. Meditative contemplation is internal.

When I meditate and sense that I might experience a transcendent state of awareness, I become fearful and withdraw.

This is a commonly reported experience. It may occur because one is reluctant to experience a different state of awareness, fear of the unknown, or because it begins suddenly without prior indication. Confront the possibility of perceiving more accurately and having your awareness clarified. Observe the process.

I do not know anyone who shares my interest in spiritual matters, yet I desire to have friends and supportive personal relationships.

Choose your friends and enjoy wholesome relationships without being "needy" or desperate. Even with companions who are "on the spiritual path" it is not necessary to talk about metaphysical ideas. In fact, too much talk of this kind tends to make one superficial rather than deep or profound. Be friendly and kind, yet Self-reliant. You are always *in* God. Even with personal relationships, your relationship with the Infinite is private.

Although I have been studying and meditating for several years, I do not seem to be making any spiritual progress. Should I continue as I have been doing, change what I am doing, or ... ?

Review your meditation routine and make changes that seem to be useful. Meditate with alert attention, aspiring to peace of mind and clarity of awareness. Improve your intellectual powers. Discern the difference between what you are as a spiritual being and random thoughts and feelings that occur and fade away. Live in accord with your highest understanding. How will you think and feel and what will you do when you are more spiritually aware? Cultivate those thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

What was Paramahansa Yogananda's attitude in regard to money and other material things?

He did not have strong attachments or aversions. He saw "things" as they are: as aspects of nature to be appropriately related to and used. He advised: "Banish the idea that there is a separation between what is spiritual and what is material." The power of Consciousness (Om) manifests the Primordial Field of nature (space, time, and cosmic forces) from which the universe is emanated. The physical universe is as "spiritual" as any other realm. Three attributes (gunas) pervade all realms. Although tamas guna (heaviness, inertia) is more influential in the physical world, we do not have to allow our thoughts and feelings to be overly influenced by it. In the Bhagavad Gita and the yoga-sutras "the forces of nature" are said to be the last influences to be overcome or transcended. This does not mean that we have to avoid contact with material things. The key to freedom is to "be in the world but not of it," to appropriately relate to the world while maintaining Self- and God-awareness.

During his early years with Sri Yukteswar, when my guru expressed his desire to be a reclusive yogi without having to be involved in organizational activities, Sri Yukteswar said to him: "That is a selfish attitude; do you want all of the divine food for yourself? Where would you be today if the lineage of large-hearted gurus had not provided you the opportunity to know God? Much work remains for you to do in the world."

Paramahansaji worked tirelessly for thirty-two years to establish the teachings of yoga in the West and train disciples who were receptive. His was not an easy mission to fulfill. Of the

many thousands of people who were attracted to him, only a few really "heard" his message and fewer still practiced what they were taught. He was not discouraged. He said, "I was planting [spiritual] seeds in the soil of their subconscious which will [when the time is right for them] grow roots and sprout. He was a great visionary, often saying: "I am sowing the seeds for the future of this work in the ethers." Many of his projects came into manifestation during his physical lifetime and many are still emerging.

In 1951 my guru told me of his wish for a temple to eventually be built on the site overlooking the SRF Lake Shrine in Pacific Palisades, California. He told me that he had asked James Lynn, a wealthy, spiritually advanced disciple, to purchase it for the organization (which Mr. Lynn did). The temple, dedicated five years ago, now serves thousands of devotees. When I lived at the SRF Center in Phoenix, Arizona, in the early 1950s, he told me that a large, flourishing work would eventually unfold in that city. What he imagined and wished for is now actual.

To accomplish his purposes, my guru used all available means to reach out to and serve truth seekers. He said, "It is not wrong to use business methods (advertising in magazines and newspapers and other effective means of communication) for spiritual purposes." Devoting most of his time and energy to serve others, he reserved a few hours each early morning to meditate and do his inner work on behalf of disciples. (His "inner work" consisted of mental and spiritual attunement with disciples and visualization and prayer for global harmony and enlightenment.)

During the three years before his passing, he chose to live in a modest house near Twentynine Palms, California, about two hours driving time from Los Angeles. There, he wrote his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, met with a few disciples, and continued to direct organizational activities.

From time to time I hear (or read) that Babaji has appeared to someone in a vision or has communicated by mental telepathy and instructed that person to teach, or has recently appointed new representatives for the 21st century. What am I to think about such stories?

Don't think about them; they are false. Paramahansaji said that after he was gone, many such claims would be made—and

that they should not be believed. There is no need for Babaji to appoint new "representatives"—the lineage of gurus (teachers) through whom this work is transmitted is already established. Paramahansaji did say that Babaji sometimes works with other individuals and group endeavors to fulfill his mission—quietly and privately, in ways which do not conflict with the transmission of kriya yoga through the line of gurus.

What happens to the souls of pets (domesticated animals) when they die of natural causes or are put to sleep?

What happens to all souls when they leave the physical body? They continue to live in the subtle astral realm. Souls that animate animal bodies may return in another animal form or may return in a form that is more evolved in accord with their need and their ability to express. Every day, millions of souls (units of the one field of Consciousness) die to the physical world and millions are born into it. There is no need to grieve nor to be overly concerned about the processes of life. Enjoy the company of your friends, relatives, and animals while allowing them to experience the fulfillment of their own purposes in time and space.

When I meditate, I do not see the light of the spiritual eye. Is seeing it a matter of importance?

Although perception of inner light can aid concentration, it is more important to experience mental calmness and refined superconscious states. When thoughts are weak or subtle, you may then spontaneously become aware of inner light. If you do, observe it while going more deeply into the silence. More important than what is seen or felt is clear awareness of what you are and your relationship to the wholeness of life.

I have known individuals who could easily see the light of the spiritual eye (or claimed to do so) and pleasant meditative moods who were emotionally unbalanced or intellectually deficient. This is not to say that their subjective perceptions (if real) were not of some value to them.

During one of the retreats at CSA headquarters, you mentioned a recipe you use for your usual "breakfast." What is it?

My breakfast routine is quick and efficient. Sometimes I have a portion of fresh fruit: an apple or a slice of pineapple. Usually, I drink the following mixture, blended for a minute or so, until smooth. As you can see, it is nutrition-rich and easy to prepare.

1 cup	Goat milk (available at some supermarkets).
1 tbsp	Almond or pistachio nut butter.
1 tbsp	Ground sesame seeds.
1 tbsp	Chavanprash (an herbal compound available at some Indian food markets.)
1 tbsp	Brewers yeast (debittered).
3 or 4	Fresh dates (with pits removed).

I use a Vita-Mix blender—any high-powered blender will suffice. It can also be used to make nut butters or grind seeds. If goat or cow milk is not desired, or tolerated, soy or rice milk could be substituted. The liquid, as a vehicle to transport the herbal influences and nutrients of other food ingredients into the body, is best used at room temperature or warmer.

At midday I sometimes eat an apple or orange. The early evening meal is composed of cooked vegetables, sometimes with pasta or beans. I supplement my daily diet with 600 I.U. of vitamin E, 1000 mgs. of vitamin C, and selenium, which are considered to be useful antioxidants. (Because only a blood level of 200 mgs. of vitamin C is maintained for a few hours, the excess being eliminated, it should be used in the form of a time-release tablet or taken throughout the day, after meals. Vitamins E and C together in the body are believed to be more potent in their antioxidant effects.

Regarding food: a low (but sufficient) calorie, nutrition-rich diet composed of natural (rather than commercially processed or modified) foods is ideal. It has been observed that people who eat like this have fewer incidents of heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and other debilitating physical ailments.

In some of your books you describe the stages of spiritual unfoldment. How can one awaken to the higher levels more quickly and easily?

By stages I mean degrees of clarity of awareness. To more

easily experience a clear (less modified) state of awareness, aspire to experience it. Assume the corresponding outlook, thoughts, and feelings, and act as you would act if you were already established in the state of awareness you consider to be ideal.

My inquiry is in regard to methods used to fulfill desires or achieve goals. Prayer, visualization, and constructive actions (when I know what they should be and perform them) occasionally produce exceptional results. At other times, results are incomplete or nonexistent. Are there other influences involved: personal karma, planetary influences, or God's will?

Your states of consciousness determine your mental states, feelings, actions, reactions, and how omnipresent Cosmic Mind, the forces of nature, and others respond to you.

Personal karma: Memories and subconscious conditionings (samskaras) accumulated through the years because of your thoughts, moods, desires, and the opinions of others that you have accepted as being true, although they may be false. Even if you are not aware of them, they may influence your thinking, emotional states, and behaviors. Resist, weaken, and neutralize them by constructive thinking and behaviors and superconscious meditation practice.

What is commonly referred to as "God's will" is really the innate urge of infinite Consciousness to express and fulfill evolutionary impulses and inclinations. When what you think and do enhances your life (and the lives of others who may also be involved or influenced) and clarifies and expands your awareness, then know that you are on your right course in life and in harmonious accord with "God's will" for you.

Did you endeavor to seek out or have another guru after Yogananda left this world in 1952?

No. My spiritual connection with my guru was established long before my present incarnation. I intuitively knew this when I first read his book *Autobiography of a Yogi* (in 1949) and he confirmed it several times during private conversations at his Twentynine Palms retreat house when I went to be with him (1950-51). Although through the years I have met a few highly aware people, and have enjoyed pleasant friendships, my spiri

tual path and teaching mission have always been anchored in this tradition. While respecting all authentic enlightenment traditions (as we should), never have I deviated from our basic teachings and practices, nor have I ever been inclined to do so.

Can it be helpful for kriya yoga practitioners to have their horoscope analyzed by a vedic astrologer?

Sri Yukteswar, who had highly developed intellectual and intuitive powers, examined the horoscopes of his disciples to more fully determine their psychological characteristics and tendencies. Although he sometimes advised a person to wear a bracelet or bangle made of certain metals (and sometimes gems); and recommended dietary and other regimens (based on his knowledge of Ayurveda) and attitude and behavioral modifications; his primary emphasis was that of Self-knowledge and God-realization. He said (as all wise yogis do) that a person should use every available means to avoid suffering and misfortune and to cultivate spiritual growth.

If you want to have your horoscope analyzed, contact a competent vedic astrologer who is spiritually aware and use your common sense when evaluating what you are told. Avoid thinking that you are wholly dependent on cosmic (or any other external) influences. The more spiritually aware you are, the less you will be influenced by external conditions (including subconscious or karmic states which are external to you as a spiritual being).

One of our longtime members and a kriya initiate recently completed an intensive course of study in vedic astrology and is now available for consultation. Contact:
Susan Lowe
Tel: (904) 672-6981
e-mail: lowesusie@hotmail.com

I don't think that I was fully prepared to make a commitment to this path when I was initiated into kriya yoga meditation practices. I now feel more certain about my readiness. Should I be initiated again?

If you think that you are ready to be firmly resolved, you can make that choice now. Also, when possible, participate in another kriya initiation service to review your practices and

renew your commitment. It is my experience that doing this is beneficial. I was first initiated by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1950 and again attended an initiation service with a group of devotees in 1951. The more intimately we are involved with this path, the more clearly we comprehend its value and the deeper we are drawn into attunement with the gurus and the spiritual support that is available to us.

Remember that the kriya yoga path includes more than the practice of meditation techniques. "Complete" practice includes self-disciplined living; profound study to acquire more knowledge of ourselves, God, and our relationship to life; and purification of our illusional sense of selfhood (ego). Doing these things enables us to meditate more effectively and meditation supports right living and intellectual and intuitive inquiry into the meaning of life and its processes. Meditating to the stage of superconsciousness purifies the ego.

To support your resolve on this path, read the yoga-sutras frequently. Lahiri Mahasaya advised his disciples to read a few verses from this source and the Bhagavad Gita every day. A good time to do this is after meditation practice when your mind is calm and you are more receptive to what is read.

Comment in more detail about the value of devotion.

Devotion (spiritual ardor) keeps our attention focused on God and inspires and empowers us to do our utmost to fulfill the desire of our heart (being), which is to be God-realized.

We should have insight into what God is. Although God is infinite Consciousness, if a personalized form or aspect of God is imagined, devotion to this concept can be beneficial. As our awareness is clarified, our perception of God becomes more accurate. When we are God-realized, we know and experience the reality of God as God is.

Balance devotion with intellectual inquiry, meditation, and practical, effective living. Avoid emotionalism and fantasy. Be firmly resolved on the spiritual path, yet patient. Once, when I was concerned about my seeming lack of spiritual progress (I wanted to be enlightened immediately) my guru told me to con

tinue to aspire while cultivating patience. In some yoga texts the word *patience* is used as a synonym for inner (Self, not personality-based) contentment in all circumstances—one of the basic qualities to be cultivated by a devotee.

Is it helpful for a gathering of devotees to pray for the welfare of others and for world peace and harmony?

Members of such well-intentioned group endeavors probably derive more benefit than the intended recipients. Research projects, during which individuals were prayed for, revealed that subjects who did not know of prayers being made on their behalf sometimes experienced marginal improvements in personal circumstances and more rapid healing than did individuals who were not prayed for. Praying for others will not hurt them, and may help. Prayers of spiritually aware people are most helpful.

The most effective way to pray is to first be established in Self- and God-awareness, then include others in that consciousness of the wholeness of God. While we can pray for specific outcomes (if we know what is best for others), it is usually better to pray for their highest good (and to know and believe it) and let the most appropriate results occur.

Paramahansa Yogananda prayed for planetary enlightenment and for others every day, as do I. It is recommended that you also do this.

Meditation results in divine revelation. Out of the reality of one's being arises the perception and realization of the pure Self. Self-realization is conscious cognition of our absolute identity with God, the Self-revelation of our true nature by the illumination of our pure consciousness. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

Commentary

Hatha Yoga Pradipika
(Light on Hatha Yoga)

Continued from last issue:
Chapter Three

1. **As the serpent upholds the earth and all of nature, so kundalini is the support of all yoga practices.**

In vedic mythology, the cosmic kundalini power that enlivens and supports nature is symbolized as a serpent wrapped around the planet. Individualized kundalini power that enlivens our bodies and supports our spiritual endeavors is a manifestation of our own soul force (which is mostly dormant in people who are not yet spiritually awake).

2. **By the guru's grace this sleeping kundalini is awakened, then all of the chakras and knots are opened.**

Mild forms of hatha yoga, pranayama, and meditation can be practiced after learning the basic procedures from others or from books. For intensive yoga practice, a guru (a personal, qualified teacher) is usually needed to provide instruction and to transmit the spiritual force (kundalini shakti) that awakens the disciple's latent spiritual forces. Prior to having these forces awakened, the disciple should be well-grounded in the yamas (moral principles) and niyamas (observance of fundamental spiritual practices), and be a skillful meditator.

To endeavor to experience kundalini awakening by force or by attending an advertised seminar or workshop is unwise; nothing worthwhile will result. When the energy of kundalini flows freely through the sushumna (the central path in the spine), the chakras are enlivened. The "knots" are blockages which interfere with the free flow of life force as well as strong attachments which confine the devotee's awareness. The latter are attachments to the physical body and material things; attachment to

the illusional sense of selfhood (ego); and attachment to meditative perceptions and refined states of consciousness which may prevail before illumination of consciousness is actualized.

3. Then indeed sushumna becomes the pathway of prana, the mind is free of all connections, and death is averted.

When life force flows freely in the sushumna and to the higher brain, the mind is calmed and its operations become orderly. One is then able to more easily transcend (rise above) conditioned states of consciousness and is no longer subject to their influences. One does not then "die" (lose awareness of existing as a unit of infinite Consciousness).

4. Sushumna is referred to by many names.

The radiant path, the great pathway, the path of the void, and the middle pathway are some of the descriptive names used to refer to sushumna. It is said to be influential during intervals between inhalation and exhalation, when air flows equally through both nostrils, and when balanced activity of both brain hemispheres prevails. It is through this pathway that life forces move during the practice of kriya pranayama.

5. The goddess sleeping at Brahma's door should be aroused by practicing mudras.

Kundalini is sometimes referred to as a goddess sleeping at the entrance of the sushumna. Its energies are said to be feminine in character and are to be united with the crown chakra (said to have a positive polarity). The "mystic marriage" is then consummated within the yogi's body.

Kundalini energies dormant in the lower chakras, at the entrance (door) of sushumna, can be gently awakened and encouraged to move. In common usage the word mudra is defined as a symbolic gesture. In yoga texts it is used to refer to "seals" or "locks" which bind and confine life force, and which can be opened by using procedures, also called mudras.

6. **[Recommended are] maha mudra, maha bandha, maha vedha, kechari, uddiyana bandha, mula bandha, jalandhara bandha;**
7. **Viparita karani mudra, vajroli, and shakti chalana are the ten mudras which eliminate old age and death.**
8. **[It is said] that they bestow the divine powers and are held in high esteem by all siddhas.**
9. **They must remain secret like precious gems, and not be talked about with anyone, just as one does not tell others about intimate personal relationships.**

Using mudras may enable the devotee to acquire a degree of conscious control over physical processes which are usually involuntary, allow regenerative forces to circulate freely so that physical and psychological health are improved, and allow spiritual qualities to emerge. Like the ancient Chinese practitioners of Taoism, early practitioners of yoga sought to transcend the human condition. The Tao ("dow'), "the way," or "the way of heaven," is that of living in harmony with the laws of nature and conservation and right use of vital forces that will enable one to effortlessly accomplish worthy purposes. The ultimate aim is the actualization of spiritual potential and illumination of consciousness. Along with other regimens, adherents practiced forms of Ta'i Chi to experience flows of life force (*chi*, "chee"), the kundalini energy, which hatha yoga practitioners endeavor to experience by practicing asanas, pranayama, and mudras.

The so-called "divine powers" (siddhas), described in the third chapter of Patanjali's yoga-sutras, include clairvoyance, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, invincibility, and the ability to have desires or intentions immediately fulfilled. A siddha has accomplished "perfection" because of being Self-realized.

The intricate practices of yoga are privately taught by the guru in accord with the disciple's ability to learn and capacity to practice. Although they are superficially described in many books, and in our current era are freely talked about, the "timeless," reliable way to learn them is from a qualified guru. Sincere practitioners of yoga are advised to privately practice and to avoid discussions about their routines or experiences with anyone except their teacher.

10. - 18. Maha mudra and its benefits are described.

The *maha* ("great) mudra is one of the procedures taught when one is initiated into this kriya yoga tradition.

19 - 25. Maha bandha [lock] is described.

This is usually practiced after doing a round of bhastrika (bellows) pranayama. It is performed by exhaling, dropping the chin down to close off the air pathway in the throat, and contracting the anal sphincter and pulling it upward to encourage life force to ascend through the sushumna.

26. - 31. Maha vedha [piercing] is described.

This process, performed by bouncing up and down while in the lotus posture, is not taught in our kriya yoga tradition.

32. - 54. Kechari [space-moving] mudra is described.

This has been discussed in a former issue of this magazine. The modified physical form is practiced by rolling the tongue up and back toward the throat and against the roof of the mouth (when practicing kriya pranayama). Doing this is said to lower the pressure of blood flowing to the brain and to elicit mental calmness. The advanced form of practice is more extreme.

The nonphysical form is accomplished when the mind is calm and awareness is clarified, resulting in a perception of being free in space because the ordinary sense of boundaries between self and infinite Consciousness is dissolved.

55. - 60. Uddiyana [upward] bandha [lock] is described.
61. - 69. Mula [root] bandha [lock] is described.
70. - 77. Jalandhara [(wind) pipe] bandha [lock] is described.

Uddiyana bandha is practiced by bending forward (while in a seated posture or standing), inhaling deeply then exhaling, performing the root lock by contracting the anal sphincters and pulling them upward, and the throat lock, then lifting the tho

racic cavity upward to create a suction effect that pulls the relaxed abdominal muscles upward. This is said to awaken dormant life force in the lower chakras and send it upward. It enlivens the lumbar chakra, vitalizes the physical systems, and improves powers of digestion and elimination.

78. - 82. Viparita karani [inverse action] mudra is described.

This mudra is the shoulder stand (sarvangasana) or a modified form of it, with legs and feet extended upward. The pressure of gravity on lower extremities is relieved and with the chin tucked into the neck cavity the thyroid gland is beneficially stimulated. Most of the mudras and several of the asanas aid in balancing the secretions of various endocrine glands.

83. - 111. Vajroli [thunder bolt] mudra is described.

Practiced by sitting on the floor with both legs extended, placing the hands on the floor beside the hips, tipping back slightly with the extended legs raised at a forty five degree angle and the body balanced on the buttocks. This is said to give control over sexual impulses, the sphincter muscles used to regulate urination and seminal ejaculation or orgasm, and the life forces that flow through the second chakra

112. Shakti chalana [stirring power] mudra is described.

This includes a combination of locks and mudras used to stimulate life forces in the lower chakras and encourage their upward movement.

– to be continued

NEWS

NEW YORK CITY SEMINAR BROCHURES AND POSTERS

Your assistance in publicizing this seminar will be appreciated. Request printed brochures to give to friends, put in book and health food stores, or distribute elsewhere where they may be seen by persons interested in spiritual growth. Posters are also available.

Specify how many you can immediately distribute. Telephone the CSA office, fax, or e-mail.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW RADIANCE READERS

More than one hundred new kriya initiates in Florida and California were added to the Radiance mailing list in February and March. If you are a new initiate, you are welcomed, with love.

JULY MEDITATION GROUP LEADER TRAINING AT CSA HEADQUARTERS

The July 1–6 week long retreat is open to everyone. Each afternoon I will conduct a special group session for persons who want to learn how to facilitate meditation sessions in their home community.

USE THE ENCLOSED RESPONSE FORM

The *dialogue* department of this magazine features inquiries from our readers. Help me by participating; help yourself by your participation; help others who might benefit from your sharing.

RADIANCE RENEWAL

CSA members who are kriya initiates receive Radiance free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe. In the U.S., $6.00 for one year, 4 issues; outside the U.S., $10.00, includes airmail postage. We do not send renewal notices.

BACK ISSUES OF RADIANCE

Use the enclosed response form to request back issues. We will send the ones which are available.

Meditation Seminar in New York City

Donation Basis. Reservations Recommended.

Saturday, April 28, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Holiday Inn, 440 West 57th Street
Ballroom, ground floor.

Offered in NYC for the first time. Tell your spiritually inclined friends about this program. Kriya initiation at 3:30 p.m. for new applicants and for initiates to review their practice. If you will be traveling from Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Boston, or another city, make travel plans early. If hotel reservations are needed, telephone Holiday Inn (212-581-8100) or make other arrangements.

Self-Transformation Retreats at CSA Headquarters

Spring: April 29 – May 4 • May 6 – 11 • May 13 – 18
Autumn: September 9 – 14 • September 16 – 21

For kriya initiates. Limited to 20 participants. Stay for one or more weeks. Arrive Saturday or Sunday. Private guest rooms. Prepare your own vegetarian meals.

Meditation at 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. A class on kriya yoga philosophy and practices at 7 a.m. Two hours of work-service daily. Free time for rest, study, and inner renewal.

Donation basis. Reservations required. Request travel directions if needed.

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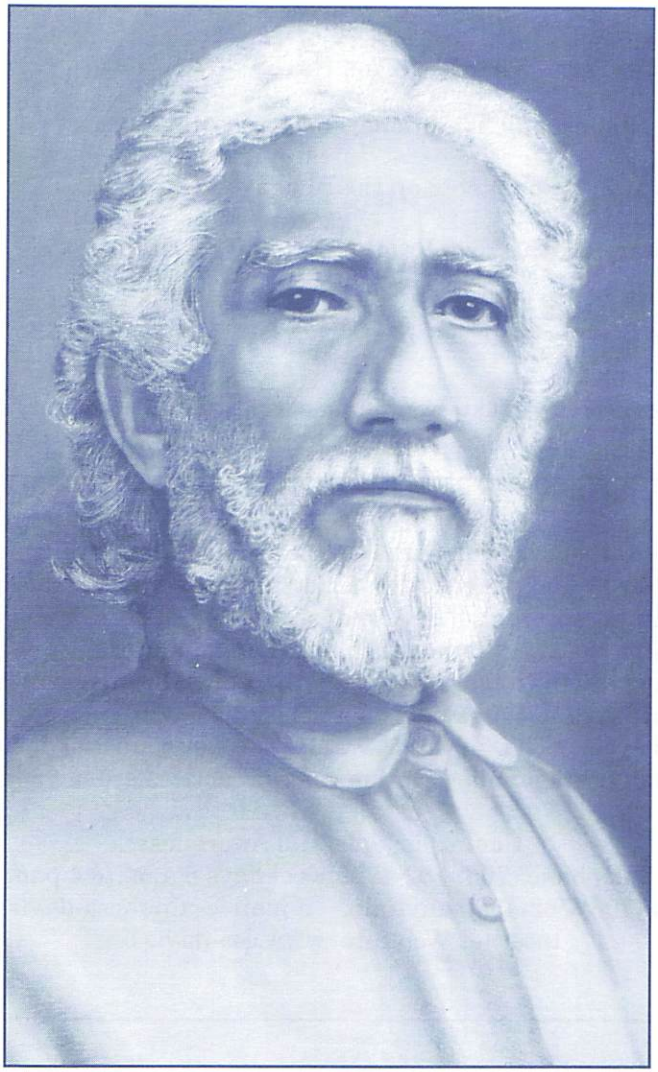
Regular summer retreat schedules are published in *Truth Journal* and our newsletter.

Radiance

A Quarterly Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

July – September 2001



The Self, while observing that which is present [to be perceived], remains pure consciousness. The purpose [for the existence] of the universe is to provide Consciousness a field for expression. – *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 2:20,21*

Nowhere in the world is there anything that purifies that is equal to God-knowledge. The devotee who is perfected in yoga [samadhi], in the course of time discovers that knowledge in the Self. – *The Bhagavad Gita 4:38*

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Front cover photo: Sri Yukteswar. From a painting by Margot Bergman.

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Unless otherwise noted, the articles in *Radiance* magazine are written by Roy Eugene Davis for initiates in the kriya yoga tradition represented by Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, and their qualified successors. Initiated CSA members receive this magazine free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe.

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Are You Using the Knowledge You Have?

You have access to knowledge of philosophical principles and lifestyle guidelines which can enable you to live with inspired purpose, and have been initiated into a spiritual tradition with roots in the field of pure consciousness.

If knowledge is not skillfully used, it is powerless to confer benefits. What are you doing with it? In the sanctuary of your inner being, ponder your response to the following questions:

Do you always think, feel, make choices, and act in accord with what you know to be highest and best for you?

Very few people do, unless they are fully enlightened. Do the best you can as conscious spiritual exercise. With practice, your thinking will always be rational and optimistic, you will be happy and enthusiastic, your choices will be appropriate, and your skillful, constructive actions will produce positive results. Soul-centered rather than personality-centered, know that you are anchored in the Infinite.

Are you always alert and attentive rather than lethargic or inattentive?

Controlled attention is the master-key to effective living and to skillful meditation practice. The third and fourth verses in the first chapter of Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* explain that the Self-aware soul abides in its true nature; when not thus Self-aware, attention tends to be attracted to and identified with mental states (as well as emotions and other objects within range of the senses). Avoid allowing uncontrolled emotions, restlessness, fantasies, or mental dullness to dominate your awareness. Train yourself to be soul-centered regardless of what you are doing, experiencing, or observing.

Are you always aware of your true nature in relationship to the Infinite?

As often as necessary, remind yourself of what you are in relationship to the Infinite. You are an immortal spiritual being playing a role in space-time. Whether you always know it or not, you abide in the one field of consciousness (God). Until you are permanently Self- and God-realized, improve your knowing. An intellectual grasp of the truth of what you are in relationship to the Infinite is helpful; direct, intuitive apprehension is better; actual realization is superior. Strive to intellectually comprehend, intuitively know, and realize the truth of the essence of your being and of consciousness and its processes. Patiently persist.

Do You Faithfully Adhere to an Appropriate Self-Care Regimen?

Review your self-care routines in regard to the food you eat, exercise program, schedule for activity and rest, and whatever else you do for physical and mental health and well-being. Review the Lifestyle Guidelines in lesson two, part two (starting on page 33) of *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living*. Know your basic mind-body constitution and adapt your exercise program and other activities accordingly.

Do you read the recommended literature?

Recommended reading for kriya initiates: Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* (in *A Guide to Kriya Yoga*, *Life Surrendered in God*, and *The Path of Light*) and *The Eternal Way*: the inner meaning of the Bhagavad Gita.

A good time to read a few lines of text is immediately after meditating when your mind is more receptive and awareness is more clear. Don't despair if you do not fully grasp all that you read. As your intellectual and intuitive powers improve and inner knowledge unfolds, you will eventually understand everything and have your own insights.

Do you meditate daily?

Practice the basic meditation techniques (kriya pranayama and the supplemental routines) at least once a day to refresh your nervous system, calm the mind, and have an opportunity to perfect superconscious states. A short session can be done in a few minutes. Sit longer (30 minutes or more) when you can do so. Daily meditation will clarify your awareness. It also reinforces your commitment to the spiritual path and helps to keep you focused on important matters.

Are you an active, supporting member of CSA?

A few kriya initiates request that only *Radiance* magazine be sent to them. They say that they don't have time to read too many publications or are reluctant to become involved with an organization. Make time to read helpful information. Be an active, supporting member of CSA which is only organized for the purpose of providing helpful information and assisting truth seekers to unfold and actualize their innate potential.

Shortly after Paramahansa Yogananda met Sri Yukteswar, he admitted his aversion to organized endeavors. His guru said to him: "Where would you be today if others had not made this knowledge available to you?"

Do you care enough about the spiritual welfare of others?

Care enough to do more than wish for their highest good or pray for their spiritual fulfillment. Share your good wishes and your God-realized prayers, and do more: assist me in the service of others. Tell receptive individuals about our work. Distribute our literature. Above all, be a good example so others can readily see (and intuitively perceive) the value of the kriya yoga path.

Dialogue

The Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are requested by readers and other kriya practitioners. Use the form provided with each issue to share your questions or comments for the benefit of readers who peruse these pages.

Spiritual progress: How much depends on our own endeavors and how much on God's grace?

Our own endeavors are necessary to make us receptive to the actions of grace. Our innate urge to be fully conscious may be thwarted by mental confusion, psychological conflict, or an unrefined nervous system. The mind should be calm, thinking should be rational, psychological conflicts should be resolved, and the nervous system refined by a healthy lifestyle and regular, superconscious meditation practice. Kriya pranayama practice, moving currents of life force through the spine and brain, rapidly refines the nervous system.

When we have done our utmost to purify the mind, refine the nervous system, and clarify our awareness, unrestricted, elevating and illuminating (sattvic) impulses from within us (referred to as grace) can more easily unveil and bring forth our innate knowledge and qualities.

Kriya yoga practice—disciplined thinking and behavior, study and analysis of metaphysical principles, and surrender to God (withdrawing awareness from the illusional sense of selfhood)—removes all mental and physical obstacles to Self-realization (reference: *yoga-sutras 2:1,2*).

When I meditate, it is difficult to concentrate. When I am not meditating, my mind is restless and my attention wanders.

Anticipate (eagerly look forward to) meditation practice so that when you sit, you will be alert and attentive. Remember the purpose of practice—which is to calm the mind and clarify your awareness. When you are interested, concentration will be natu-

ral. Withdraw your attention from, and disregard, all other concerns.

At other times, remain relaxed and calm. Be attentive only to that which is important. Avoid idle talk (conversation which is nonessential or purposeless) and useless social interaction. By cultivating inward calm when engaged in normal activities you will always be more Self-aware and meditation practice will be more proficient and satisfying.

Although I practice meditation on a regular schedule and do my best to live a good life, my spiritual progress seems slow. What can I do?

Keep doing what you are doing. Beneficial improvements are occurring at deeper levels. Sooner or later you will notice that you are more aware and more insightful.

How are you evaluating your spiritual progress? Some of the indications of spiritual progress are inner contentment, mental calmness and emotional stability, increased awareness of being a part of a larger field of reality, and ability to more easily comprehend philosophical concepts.

I have long been attracted to a saint who left his body in India fifty years ago and endeavor to attune myself to his mind and consciousness when I meditate. Is this a useful practice?

The person to whom you refer was (and is) considered to have been an illumined soul. He taught others that, while it could be helpful to have a disembodied enlightened being as a focus for meditation to improve concentration, one should not think that blessings or guidance flow from an imagined object of devotion. Many people have had uplifting experiences by doing as you have been doing—not because a "saint" or guru responded, but because of their own faith or a temporary superconscious state elicited by their expectations.

In the *yoga-sutras* (1:39), several objects or ideals suitable for meditative contemplation are mentioned, among them "a chosen object that is pleasing or agreeable." Regardless of the object chosen, it will (or should) eventually be transcended.

Some teachers say that once a guru-disciple relationship is established, it persists until the disciple is liberated, even if the process requires many lifetimes. Comment on this.

A real guru-disciple relationship is an intimate soul to soul connection. The guru commits to assisting the disciple to full liberation of consciousness; the disciple commits to right living and dedicated spiritual practice. A disciple should aspire to be liberated in one lifetime. If liberation is not accomplished in one lifetime, the spiritual bond remains.

If a personal relationship between a guru and disciple that has been established cannot be maintained because they are not embodied (in the physical or an astral sphere) at the same time, transmission of grace through the lineage of gurus continues. If personal communication is not always possible, the disciple may learn, when necessary, from another teacher or some other reliable source (preferably the guru's written words or those of other enlightened teachers). When a disciple learns from other sources, attunement with their guru and the lineage of gurus should be maintained and nurtured.

On rare occasions, a disciple may request to discontinue the relationship. When this occurs and consent is given, the guru, although always radiating good will, is not obligated to provide guidance or assistance.

When I was initiated, nothing special or unusual was felt. Was my initiation authentic and beneficial?

If the one who is initiated is sincere, the instruction and the transmission of spiritual force is beneficial. The occasion is "a new beginning," not the end, of a quest for Self-knowledge. The initiate should then wholeheartedly adopt a lifestyle and spiritual study and practice regimen that will enable him or her to more easily experience rapid spiritual growth.

Did Paramahansa Yogananda recommend the practice of hatha yoga?

He recommended hatha yoga, but did not emphasize it in his lectures or writings. At some public functions, he would ask two

or three disciples to demonstrate a few of the asanas.

Hatha yoga practice is life-enhancing and can be helpful as preparation for superconscious meditation. After the basic procedures have been learned, it is best to practice alone, in a meditative mood. Yoga practice is "spoiled" when engaged in as a social event or is commercialized.

From time to time I have thought that I would like to lead a meditation group or even be a teacher in the kriya yoga tradition. How can I know whether I am really meant to do this?

You can lead a meditation group now. If you know two or three friends who are interested in meeting once a week or every now and then, do it. Just come together and sit to meditate for an hour. If someone needs instruction, explain the simple process as outlined in the first lesson of *Seven Lessons in Conscious Living* or have them listen to my meditation instruction cassette tape. Avoid nonessential discussion.

To be a teacher, adhere to your spiritual practice routines, continue to study, and attend our seminars and retreats to improve your understanding of the basic teaching emphasis of this tradition and become more attuned to it. Remember that enlightened consciousness is the real teacher. Our duty is to accurately and selflessly represent the kriya yoga tradition and provide information and encouragement.

Can a person "take on" another person's karma to help them?

Although it is possible, it is rarely done. The better way to help others is to educate them to help themselves and to pray for their well-being and spiritual growth.

To pray (or do inner work) for others, first meditate until you are calm and Self- and God-aware. Then think of those who need help and share your awareness of wholeness with them. Physical proximity is not necessary; we (and they) abide in the ocean of infinite Life. By assisting others to experience their true nature and the wholeness of Life, they will be able to "see through" their limitations or problems and experience beneficial changes

in accord with their higher understanding.

I enjoy discussing metaphysical ideas with others. Is this useful?

If brief discussion is beneficial for you or for others, it can be useful. If engaged in as an excuse to talk or motivated by loneliness, it is not spiritually useful; it would be better to do something more productive. If the life you are living is meaningful, there will not be a need to talk too much about metaphysical matters. It is better to live an ideal life than to talk too much about it.

Thinking about abstract philosophical concepts is difficult. I have a devotional temperament. Chanting God's name makes me feel good.

Balance your devotional practices with reading about and contemplating the inner meaning of philosophical concepts. After chanting, go beyond "feeling good" to a superconscious state. Devotion can keep you focused on the spiritual path. Study of higher realities will enable you to effectively relate to the world and unfold your innate knowledge. Be devotional and knowledgeable. The path of devotion alone may result in emotionalism. Balanced, satisfying spiritual growth can occur more easily when the most useful aspects of all of the yogic paths are integrated.

Paramahansa Yogananda was strongly devotional when he met Sri Yukteswar. He said that his first few months with his guru were not easy because of Sri Yukteswar's plainspoken manner and emphasis on rational thinking and attention to details. Paramahansaji said that he needed that experience in order to develop a more balanced personality.

When someone asks me, "What are the prerequisites for kriya initiation?" What should I tell them?

Preparation is important. Recommend that they first read about the kriya yoga tradition to acquire a little understanding of it and learn and practice the basic meditation procedures. The ideal characteristics for one who wants to be initiated are:

- Sincerity.

- A capacity to learn.
- Absence of mental perversity (an inclination to distort information for self-centered purposes).
- Respect for the teacher and the teachings.
- Willingness to learn.
- Commitment to practice.

In Patanjali's yoga-sutras it is mentioned that one on the spiritual path is eventually removed from the influences of cosmic forces. What does this mean?

> With the dawning of the knowledge that accompanies Self- and God-realization, all obstructions and restrictions cease to be influential.
>
> With their dissolution, the Self-reclaims omnipresence.
>
> With the dawning of knowledge, the cosmic forces, having served their purposes, cease to be influential.
>
> *–yoga-sutras 4:30–32*

The dawning of the knowledge that accompanies Self- and God-realization occurs spontaneously when our awareness is no longer blurred and fragmented. Conditions which formerly obscured our perception of the truth fade away. Realization of our true nature in relationship to the Infinite is then stable.

The final "overcoming" occurs when our enlightenment is complete and permanent, and forces in nature governed by the three constituent attributes (gunas) cannot disturb our Self- and God-realization. Before that, the gunas "serve their purposes" by regulating the governing principles (vata, pitta, and kapha influences) that pervade our mind and body.

When meditating, if tamas guna is influential, a feeling of dullness may be present. The influence of rajas guna may cause superconscious meditative states (samadhi) to be mixed with various perceptions: thoughts and feelings, visions, or ecstasy. The influence of sattva guna may result in a sense of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. When these influences are absent, pure existence-being is realized.

Insight

Sri Yukteswar's Comments on the Bhagavad Gita

Sri Yukteswar wrote articles on yoga and vedic astrology and two books (*The Holy Science* and a Bhagavad Gita commentary which is not readily available). After being initiated by Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar met with truth seekers during which he explained the inner meaning of the Gita. He also visited Lahiri Mahasaya for instruction in regard to some verses. When in India, in October, I will make inquiries about the availability of his Gita commentary.

Meditators offer all actions of their senses and of their vital forces into the fire of yoga of self-control which is kindled by knowledge.

– *4:27*

[Skillful] meditators awaken [innate] knowledge by self-restraint, concentration, and meditation. The subtle organs of perception and action are dissolved and restlessness ceases.

Note: Kriya yoga meditation is practiced by quieting the mind and senses, then concentrating on a chosen object or ideal.

The subtle organs of perception and action which make possible perception of, and expression in, the objective realm are "dissolved" (awareness transcends them) during profound samadhi (meditative superconsciousness).

Some [devotees] offer their material possessions or austerities or spiritual practices; ascetic devotees offer their study and learning. – *4:28*

Determined devotees enhance their physical health by natural means and disciplined living. They then restrain [and pacify] the wavelike movements of thoughts and mood shifts in their mind and awareness and regulate the actions of prana [life force] by pranayama practice.

Others offer apana into prana and prana into apana [to neutralize these flows of life force]. – *4:29*

[Kriya] yogis mix prana [ascending life force in the spine] with apana [down flowing life force]. Yoga texts describe this practice as *kevali pranayama*, the natural way to still the breath. During the restrained state, restlessness ceases, the mind is calmed, and [Self] knowledge is revealed. The eternal happiness of the Self is firmly established.

Fluctuations in the field of individualized awareness can also be subdued by regulating eating and other behaviors.

Note: Kevali (absolute retention), stabilization of breathing (and awareness) may occur after kriya pranayama practice. Breathlessness is not the aim; the purpose of practice is to clarify awareness. Slow, nonforceful breathing contributes to mental calmness and (when sitting still) mental calmness is accompanied by slow, nonforceful breathing.

Some meditators endeavor to elicit superconscious states before the body and mind are calm. If physical relaxation and mental peace are accomplished first, it is easier to experience superconsciousness.

The best way to overcome restlessness is to practice kriya pranayama, then sit in the deep silence that follows.

When the devotee sustains concentration on the ultimate Self, that [pure consciousness] is realized. When established in that, oneness is realized. There is no doubt about it. – *Lahiri Mahasaya*

Commentary

Hatha Yoga Pradipika
(Light on Hatha Yoga)

Continued from last issue:
Chapter Four: Samadhi

1. Salutations to the [true] guru , pure consciousness, the source of the primordial sound [Om]. One who is wholly devoted to [knowing] this is certain to realize the Absolute.

Respectful acknowledgment of the field of absolute, pure consciousness enables us to be more aware of it and weakens our illusional sense of selfhood. The source of everything, with knowledge of itself within itself, it is the true teacher. At the core of our being, we are pure consciousness, therefore, all knowledge of it is within us.

Within the field of one, omnipresent consciousness the vibration of its power (Om) is emanated. The cosmic forces manifested in Om produce universes.

Pure consciousness is the only guru (teacher that reveals truth). A person who is qualified (because Self-realized, or authorized by a Self-realized teacher) to act as a guru directs the attention of truth seekers to it. Paramahansa Yogananda often said, "I am not the guru. God is the guru; I am only God's servant."

A lineage of spiritually enlightened gurus begins with the field of pure consciousness. If the source is not acknowledged, what is taught, however appealing, is not authentic. Nor can there be a pure transmission of liberating knowledge and transformative, redemptive grace.

2. I will explain the best means to practice samadhi which enables one to transcend death [the false notion of nonexistence] and realize the supreme bliss of absolute [pure] consciousness.

The Sanskrit word *samadhi* means oneness, wholeness. Samadhi (superconsciousness) prevails when awareness is no longer modified or fragmented. Ordinary states of awareness are modified by 1) concepts and ideas even though they may be valid or reasonable; 2) the influence of memories; 3) illusions, mistaken or incomplete perceptions; 4) hallucinations, unreal phenomena produced by a disordered mind; 5) sleep and dreaming.

The "supreme bliss" is the pure joy of Self-knowledge.

3,4. States of samadhi are described.

Some of which are *raja yoga* (realization of supreme unification of awareness with pure consciousness); perfect perception of reality; transcendental awareness; realization of the true essence; *sabikalpa*, samadhi supported by an object of perception; *nirbikalpa*, samadhi without the support of an object of perception; *sahaja*, spontaneous, constant oneness.

Until samadhi is flawless, preliminary states are modified because mixed with or influenced by:

- Thoughts, emotional unrest, or inability to concentrate.
- Restless or disordered flows of life force in the body.
- Fluctuations and changes that occur in the field of awareness caused by subliminal forces and instinctual drives which are not yet pacified, neutralized, or transcended.
- Tenacious identification of the essence of being with an illusional sense of selfhood (ego, the notion that we are separate from the one field of consciousness).

Samadhi supported by an object of perception is usually a semiconscious state during which thoughts or other subtle perceptions may be present. In this state, innate knowledge is unveiled, insights emerge into awareness and (virtuous) qualities become more dominant.

Samadhi which is not supported by an object is absolute or pure realization of existence-being.

5. As salt merges in the sea, so individualized awareness is merged with the object of meditative contemplation in samadhi.
6. When [restless] movements of prana cease, awareness is restored to wholeness. Samadhi is then accomplished.
7. When samadhi is realized, no distinction between individualized awareness and God exists.

When we are not aware of our true nature in relationship to the Infinite it is because we are egocentric and our attention is diffused (scattered). By acknowledging our true nature and directing our attention to that which is real and changeless, our awareness is removed from all distractions. We realize (actually experience) that we are individualized units of the unbounded (unconfined, undivided) field of consciousness commonly referred to as God.

8. Who knows the greatness of raja yoga? Through the guru's words, inner knowledge, liberation, and perfection blossom.
9. Without the compassion of the true guru, [complete] renunciation is not possible, accurate perception is difficult, and sahaja samadhi is not attainable.

Supreme realization (raja yoga) is actualized more easily and quickly with the help of the guru's words of wisdom and silent assistance. The disciple's duty is to be attentive to what is taught, follow the advice that is provided, and be receptive to impulses of grace that are supportive and nurturing. When grace prevails, our innate knowledge, powers of perception, and abilities are rapidly unveiled.

10. When the great energy of kundalini is aroused [by various means], prana dissolves in the void.

When the energy of awakened kundalini flows to and is established in the crown chakra, it (and one's awareness) merges with pure consciousness (which has no attributes).

11. For that one whose karma is not influential and whose kundalini energies ascend, sahaja samadhi occurs naturally.

When subconscious influences are not present (because mental impressions have been removed or transcended, or their influences are dormant), and kundalini energies flow freely to the crown chakra, awareness is clarified.

12. When prana flows [freely] through sushumna, the mind is devoid of modifying characteristics. Then the roots of karma are removed.

When kundalini energies flow freely through the central pathway in the spine, mental modifications are removed or transcended. Superior superconscious influences make constructive impressions in the mind and effectively weaken and eliminate the influences of other mental impressions.

Prana (life force) is directed through the central pathway in the spine when we practice kriya pranayama. In time, the life force flows spontaneously without having to be directed by the practice of the kriya pranayama technique.

In some individuals who experience spontaneous spiritual awakening, currents of life force flow upward without having to be put into motion by practice of a meditation technique.

Fervent aspiration to be Self-realized, humility, devotion, selflessness, and compassion also contribute to the awakening of our soul forces.

13. Salutations to you who have mastered time by transcending all dualities.
14. When the mind is calm and clear and prana moves in sushumna, then upward flowing prana prevails.
15. How can there be [true] inner knowledge so long as prana moves and the mind is not calm? When prana is still and the mind is calm, one's awareness can be liberated.

In Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* (1:2) it is stated that the primary

purpose of meditation practice is to calm the wavelike movements (vrittis) that ordinarily prevail in one's mind and awareness. Kriya pranayama and spontaneous upward flows of life force produce mental calmness, emotional stability, and clarity of awareness.

Even if the "liberation" from mental modifications is but of short duration, one can have that temporary experience of freedom. Then knowing what it is like to be free, one may be inspired and strongly motivated to persist in samadhi practice and realize the permanent, free state.

16. Residing in a suitable place, having learned to move prana through the sushumna [and the middle pathway], it should be poised in the crown chakra, the center of transcendental consciousness.

A clean, quiet place without distractions is recommended for spiritual practice. After moving the life force through the spine, conclude kriya pranayama practice with life force and attention established in the crown chakra. Remain alert and attentive, allowing your innate urge to determine your experience. Having done what you could do, rest in the silence with your attention flowing to the field of pure consciousness-existence-being.

The "middle pathway" is the most subtle channel through which prana moves in the sushumna.

17. The influences of the sun and moon [currents] divide time into day and night. Sushumna consumes time.

The "sun" and "moon" currents are the flows of prana in the right and left channels in the spine. Prana flowing in the right channel is heating and enlivening; when flowing in the left channel it is cooling and pacifying. The right channel is active for about two hours, then the left channel is dominant for about two hours. These alternating flows of prana can influence the mind and emotions, keeping thoughts active and causing moods to shift. When life force moves in the middle pathway, the flows of cur-

rent are somewhat neutralized. The body becomes relaxed and the mind is calmed.

18. Of the channels through which prana flows in the body, sushumna is the path of peace.
19. When the currents of life force are increased, the inner fire should be taken along with kundalini energies into the sushumna path.

Prana flowing through the middle pathway confers mental and emotional peace. Kriya pranayama is most useful when practiced with fervent aspiration and deep concentration. One should *feel* the current moving.

20. When prana flows in sushumna, states of consciousness without mental influences are established.
21. Restraint of prana restrains mental fluctuations; restraint of mental fluctuations restrains prana.

Movements of prana in the body can influence mental processes. Regulating the flows of life force regulates mental processes; mastery of mind and states of consciousness influence the flows of life force.

22. Individualized awareness is supported by subliminal influences and the actions of prana.
23. When mental fluctuations cease, prana is stilled; when restless movements of prana cease, the mind is calmed.
24. Mind and prana mix. Both have influence.
25. If one [mind or prana] is stilled, the other is also stilled; if one is active, the other becomes active and the senses are aroused. If mind and prana are controlled, liberation of consciousness results.

The sense of individual selfhood is supported by influences emerging from unconscious and subconscious levels of mind and awareness and by movements of life force which stir the senses, keep the mind active, and stimulate the emotions. The underlying cause of the sense of individual selfhood is our misperception

of the essence of being. When we accurately discern the truth of what we are (pure consciousness), mental states and movements of prana become orderly.

26. Mercury and mind are unstable. By stabilizing mercury and the mind, what cannot be accomplished?
27. When mercury and movements of prana are stable, disease is removed. When made torpid [deprived of harmful essences], they enhance life. When the actions of the mind are stabilized, one moves through space.

The mention of mercury is a reference to the purification and burning of this element to produce ash used for revitalization purposes in Ayurvedic and Siddha Medicine traditions.

When the mind is purified, the truth seeker's awareness is no longer confined.

28. When the mind is still, prana is still, and bindu is still. By holding bindu steady, sattvic influences prevail which make the body steady.

When thoughts are quieted and life forces are not disordered, the *bindu* ("source point" of life in the crown chakra) is still. *Sattvic* (elevating, illuminating) influences are dominant; rajasic (action-causing) and tamasic (inertial) influences are subdued.

29. Mind rules the senses; prana rules mind. Dissolution is the ruler of prana and the basis of nada [primordial sound, Om].
30. This is liberation [of consciousness]. The absorption of mind and prana in pure consciousness results in samadhi.

By using the mental faculties of choice and will, a healthy-minded person can control the senses. By regulating flows of prana, the mind can be mastered. By dissolving attention and awareness in pure consciousness, life forces are controlled and the inner sound current (*nada*) can be heard. The pure sound that is discerned and in which the meditator's attention and awareness is to be merged, is the vibration of the power of consciousness (Om).

31. When breathing stops, enjoyment of the senses ceases, there is no effort [to accomplish], a changeless state of mind and awareness occurs, and attention and awareness are fully absorbed in pure consciousness.
32. All the prominent desires finished and the body being motionless results in absorption [of attention and awareness], which is only known by the Self and is beyond words.

When breathing is not forceful, the senses are quieted. When meditative contemplation is effortless, the mind is calm, and awareness is clear, absorption of attention and awareness in pure consciousness occurs.

"Prominent desires" to be renounced or subdued are those which cause thoughts to persist, attention to flow outward, and the senses to be stimulated—all of which interfere with endeavors to meditate effectively or to realize transcendental states of awareness which are not supported by externals and cannot be adequately described.

33. When the gaze is concentrated, absorption occurs. That in which the elements, senses, and energy of kundalini eternally exist and which is in all living things, is dissolved in that which has no characteristics.

Looking into the spiritual eye with inner vision restrains thinking, improves powers of concentration, and can enable samadhi to be more easily experienced.

Experiment: With your eyes open, without allowing them to move, look at a distant point in space without focusing on it. Notice that your breathing is slow and may even stop for a moment or two, and thinking stops.

When meditating, direct your attention to the spiritual eye and crown chakra. Sit still. Do not allow your eyes to move.

"That" in which the elements, senses, and cosmic forces exist has discernible characteristics. "That" which is without characteristics is pure consciousness.

34. The characteristics of samadhi are non-recollection of objects of the

senses and the non-reoccurrence of deep-seated desires or [the influences of] their mental impressions [memories].

When meditative superconsciousness is stable, memories do not arise in the mind. Desires and inclinations to desire cease (while the meditative superconscious state prevails).

After superconscious meditation, when the mind functions in the normal way, memories are more easily related to and thinking is rational. Desires are wholesome and are not compelling.

35. Scriptures are like an unrefined person; shambhavi [mudra] is like a person of refinement and good manners.

Published information can be helpful; it cannot replace direct experience. Diligent practice of shambhavi (*Shambhu*, another name for pure consciousness) mudra enables one to experience refined superconscious states that culminate in the supreme realization.

36. Internalized, concentrated awareness without eye movement is shambhavi mudra.
37. Shambhavi and khechari states, though different techniques, absorb attention and awareness in pure consciousness.
38. With perfect concentration on the inner light, by raising the eyebrows a little, a thought-free state can result.

Shambhavi mudra is practiced by gazing into the spiritual eye and merging awareness and prana there. The front lobes of the brain are then influenced.

With khechari (free in space) mudra, one's awareness and life force is absorbed in the crown chakra. When this is done, certain brain centers are quieted and the sense of boundaries between self and time and space is dissolved.

Lifting the eyebrows when starting to practice shambhavi mudra can help focus attention at the spiritual eye and may result in inner light perception.

– to be continued

News

As this issue of *Radiance* is being prepared for the printer (early June), our summer retreat programs have started and will continue until the first weekend in September. See the back cover for schedules of mid-September private retreats. Reserve early if you plan to be here.

Plans are going forward for my October India visit. In addition to the lectures in New Delhi, Mumbai (Bombay), Pune, and Bangalore, lectures are being arranged by other organizations in some of these cities. I will also will meet privately with CSA members and others who want to be initiated. *The Eternal Way* (Bhagavad Gita) will be published in India this summer.

Early next year I will present meditation seminars in southern California and a few other U.S. cities. A meditation seminar and kriya initiation will be offered in Munich, Germany (April 6,7). Details about these programs will be published late this year.

Participate in the dialogue section of *Radiance*. Ask questions. Share your experiences. Let me know your thoughts and your needs.

Few people [who erroneously think they are mortal beings] know that the wholeness and perfection of God extends fully to this earth plane. – *Mahavatar Babaji*

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For CSA Members and Kriya Initiates

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Radiance

A Quarterly Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

October – December 2001

With the dawning of knowledge that accompanies Self- and God-realization, all obstructions and restrictions cease to be influential.

With the dissolution of obstructions and restrictions, the Self reclaims omnipresence. – *Patanjali's yoga-sutras 4:30,31*

That devotee whose understanding is unattached, who has self-mastery and from whom all desires are gone, awakens to the supreme state.

– *The Bhagavad Gita 18:48*

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Photo: Kriya initiation service. CSA headquarters, August 16, 2001.

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Unless otherwise noted, the articles in *Radiance* magazine are written by Roy Eugene Davis for initiates in the kriya yoga tradition represented by Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Paramahansa Yogananda, and their qualified successors. Initiated CSA members receive this magazine free. Other kriya initiates may subscribe.

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Awaken From All Delusions

Delusion An untrue or mistaken belief.

A primary obstacle to effective living and spiritual growth is the accumulation of false beliefs that are allowed to prevail in the mind. Whether privately maintained or widely believed and disseminated, they are delusions that cloud and confine awareness and interfere with rational thinking.

Examples of minor delusions that may or may not cause problems:

- Our personality characteristics and prevailing circumstances are entirely due to environmental and social influences.
  The truth: Our personality characteristics and the circumstances that prevail result from our mental states, states of awareness, and behaviors.
- As we grow older, mental and physical disability is inevitable.
  Truth: Healthy, effectively functional, long life is possible.
- Intelligence cannot be improved.
  Truth: Powers of intellectual discernment can be developed.
- Any other commonly accepted false opinion in regard to human nature and everyday circumstances that many people believe to be true because "everyone knows" it to be so.

Major delusions that definitely cause problems:

- We are human beings with a soul.
  The truth: We are spiritual beings incarnated in a physical body.
- Karma (subconscious tendencies) cannot be overcome.
  The truth: The subconscious mind can be purified and illumined and ideal near and distant future events and experiences can be actualized by wise choice, effective actions, and God's grace.
- We cannot be spiritually enlightened in one human lifetime.
  The truth: At the core of our being we are already enlightened; we

have only to awaken to this fact.
- Evil forces are resisting the forces of good.
  The truth: Only one power of Consciousness exists and we can learn to be aware of and cooperate with it.
- Any other false belief that obscures our perception of what is true and contributes to irrational thinking, flawed perceptions, and dysfunctional or Self-limiting behaviors.

False notions may be unconsciously acquired because of inaccurate or incomplete understanding of the meanings of words, ideas, events, or circumstances; intellectual laziness; lack of curiosity; or naive acceptance of erroneous ideas and opinions expressed by unenlightened people.

- Improve your intellectual and intuitive powers.
- Be intent on knowing what is true.
- Be enthusiastically curious.
- Instead of finding fault with others whose ideas are erroneous, disregard their opinions.

If some of your false ideas were acquired at an early age before your powers of reason were developed, renounce them when you become aware of them. You will immediately be more clear-minded, feel lighter, and have more energy.

Believe what is true. Don't tenaciously cling to false ideas because they comfort the mind, elicit pleasant emotions, or enable you to maintain harmonious friendships with others who are neither knowledgeable nor interested in acquiring higher understanding.

Socialization, compliant adaptation to behaviors and ideas of people whose awareness is ordinary or conditioned is the most common way in which false ideas are transmitted from one person to another. This occurs among individuals whose interests are only mundane (worldly) as well as those who are on a spiritual path.

What can be done for others whose ideas are false? If they

are receptive to learning, inform them of the truth. If they are not receptive, allow them freedom to make their own choices.

Now and then a person tells me of their experiences. They frequently "talk" with Mary the mother of Jesus or with other disembodied beings; a psychic said that the purpose of their present incarnation is to learn patience—in the next incarnation they will do many worthwhile things; a fictional metaphysical teaching (which they believe to be authentic) is "very meaningful" to them. Because they are not yet able to discern the difference between fantasy and reality, or their inclination to indulge in illusions is more compelling than their desire to know the truth, there is nothing I can say or do to clarify their thinking.

Have the courage and the will to quickly awaken from the dream of mortality. Acknowledge, assume, and actualize all of the attributes, qualities, and powers of your divine nature.

One Supreme Self is the ultimate reality; the source of everything. The Self [of everyone] is immortal. God's attributes permeate it. Let your spiritual path be God-communion.

When the waves of mind are transcended by meditation practice, consciousness is purified and oneness with the Supreme Self is realized. The phenomenal world, the truth seeker's awareness, and Supreme Consciousness are experienced as one.

The mind has two states: restless and serene. When the mind is serene, the reality of God is reflected in it. God, all-pervading and eternal, transcends mind and intellect.

Meditation results in revelation. Out of the reality of one's being arises the perception and realization of the pure Self. Self-realization is conscious cognition of absolute identity with God, the Self-revelation of our true nature by the illumination of pure consciousness.

– Lahiri Mahasaya

Dialogue

The Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are requested by readers and other kriya practitioners. Use the form provided with each issue to share your questions or comments for the benefit of readers who peruse these pages.

When meditating, I sometimes feel God's presence as a great peace or joy. What determines this? Do astrological (or other) influences cause me to feel it?

Peace, joy, love, compassion, fullness, and enlargement and clarity of awareness may accompany a sense of the presence of God or infinite Consciousness. At such times we may feel (and "know") that we are in relationship to a larger reality. Although external conditions may be somewhat influential, awareness of the presence of God can be nurtured. One way to do it is to remember previous episodes of God-awareness and elicit them (bring them forth).

When I see light it is not always centered at the spiritual eye. Sometimes the light (or lights) are off to the side. Should I concentrate on what I see where it is or try to bring it into the spiritual eye?

Practice "steady inward gazing." Be aware at the spiritual eye and let the light manifest. Sometimes you may actually look at it; it will just be there. To improve your ability to gaze steadily, you can first do it by calmly looking at something (such as a candle flame) for a few minutes without allowing your attention to be distracted.

When I was practicing a form of mindfulness meditation, though it was not dynamic, my concentration was more one-pointed. When I practice the kriya techniques I experience heightened superconscious states and strong energy flows along with accelerated thoughts and "mind trips." Should I reduce my kriya meditation practice and return to the basic concentration routines or will restless mental activity eventually fade with continued kriya practice?

Practice a routine of kriya meditation techniques to enliven your nervous system and move prana upward, then sit in the tranquil silence until your mind and awareness are clear.

Some teachers recommend staying with one technique for the duration of a meditation session. My practice naturally seems to carry me from one technique to another and often into a place beyond technique. Should I "go with the flow" or exercise more control?

Use a meditation technique until it is no longer needed. If kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra are sufficient to produce a state of inward calmness, there is no need to do anything else. During long meditation sessions, supplemental techniques can be used to refresh your practice and keep your attention flowing to pure consciousness. When you first sit to meditate, have a definite procedure and immediately begin to practice. At all times, remain alert and attentive.

I used to experience pleasant superconscious meditations. Now, when I meditate, my mind is flooded with random thoughts. I am confused and feel insecure.

Meditate daily to experience inner peace. At other times, make your life worthwhile by having a clear sense of purpose and actively fulfilling that purpose. Refuse to allow moods to dominate your mind and awareness. Think rationally. Accept the fact that you abide in the wholeness of God now and live as the spiritual being you are. When possible, associate with others who are optimistic and forward-looking. Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Be happy. Although these may seem like simplistic ideas, you have the power, ability, and freedom to choose your mental states, states of awareness, and behaviors.

Over the past few years I have listened to taped recordings of Paramahansa Yogananda's voice and many of the phrases emerge into my mind from time to time. Recently I remembered the words, "I am the living link of the masters—follow that ...," I have been attuning myself to the gurus and certainly notice the difference. How can my attunement be enhanced?

Improve your mental and spiritual attunement by being

thankful for their guidance. Think about them and, when possible, read or listen to their words. Cultivate a loving, respectful attitude. Remember: what they represent (rather than their personality characteristics) is the most important thing. Attunement should be considered as a point-of-contact with infinite Consciousness. It is the wish of every enlightened teacher that their disciples will quickly awaken to complete Self- and God-realization.

While nurturing attunement, endeavor to live in accord with what they teach. Avoid mental perversity: inclinations to distort the teachings for self-serving purposes. Also avoid fantasy.

Many teachers, including Paramahansa Yogananda and you, spent many long hours meditating. Yet, you often recommend shorter, alert sessions with occasional longer ones. Does this mean that many of us are not advanced enough to meditate for long sessions? Are we supposed to focus more on controlling the mind, emotions, and behavior and "living the life," or is just staying centered and aware of God's presence enough? Aren't long, deep meditations necessary to explore the full extent of consciousness?

Short (twenty to thirty minute) sessions are advised for beginning meditators and for those who are not able to remain alert and attentive for an extended duration of time. If you can productively sit for an hour or more, do so. Now and then, sit for two or three hours. Depth of experience is more important than long hours of sitting. When not meditating, be aware of your relationship to the Infinite and do your best to live wisely and appropriately.

Why are there so few women gurus?

There are many spiritually enlightened women who serve as teachers (gurus). Gender is not an issue: the capacity to be an agent through which higher knowledge and spiritual force can be transmitted qualifies a person to be a guru.

I find it difficult keeping my gaze steady at the spiritual eye. How can I focus there more effectively?

Put your attention and feeling there. Doing this not only aids

concentration; it encourages the development of the front lobes of the brain which are related to will power, creativity, decision-making, optimism, and the ability to control states of awareness and personal behavior.

As a mother of three, I would like to help my children and teach them about kriya yoga practices. Are there any references or books that you know about that might help me do this?

The best way to help children is to be a good role model. They will then learn by your example how to think and act. Provide them with how-to-live knowledge and a supportive environment, then allow them the freedom to fulfill their own destiny. For *your* well-being, while performing necessary duties, adhere to your self-care and spiritual practice regimens.

I fully understand the matter of rendering selfless service without a need for recognition, but I don't understand doing this without receiving monetary compensation. How is one to continue to work if one is not paid?

There are many ways to render service. Consider all of the constructive thoughts you have and the actions you perform as service to others, society, and the planet. As an employee, or if you have your own business or profession, money will of course have to be received to enable you to live comfortably and do other things you consider to be of value.

How can the sex urge be regulated and redirected or transmuted?

This urge is natural when we are healthy. If natural urges are insistent or distracting, direct your thoughts and actions to productive, creative work. Avoid preoccupation with thoughts, talk, personal relationships, and circumstances that stimulate excessive desires. Live a normal, wholesome life. Don't be overly concerned about natural biological functions.

Now, after graduation from college, I am looking forward. I have many ideas about what I would like to do and have been told by a vedic astrologer that I could be successful in a healing profession. This appeals to me. What should I do?

What do *you* think is best for you to do? Choose a course of action that will support your highest aspirations and be supportive of others and the planet. Decide, then act skillfully with enthusiasm. Life will provide a variety of opportunities for your continued learning, personal growth, and service.

In regard to the siddhis described in the third chapter of Patanjali's yoga-sutras: Should these be intentionally cultivated?

Siddhis are exceptional abilities and powers of perception that are natural when we are spiritually awake. In the yoga-sutras, emphasis is placed on using siddhis to accomplish liberation of consciousness. If used unwisely for self-centered purposes, we may create more difficulties for ourselves. Our innate abilities and powers should be cultivated, then used for entirely constructive purposes. Powers of concentration can be used to live effectively as well as to perfect superconscious states. The ability to know what we want to know enables us to discern the truth of what we observe in the mundane realm and to discern the truth of what we are in relationship to God. The ability to accomplish what we desire can be used to achieve meaningful goals and to quickly be Self- and God-realized. If we are wisdom-directed rather than ego-driven, there will be no problems.

One of the most useful abilities we have, and which should be cultivated, is imagination. Imagine possibilities for your highest good in all aspects of your life and for experiencing rapid spiritual growth. What you can clearly "see" and believe possible that is for your highest good (and for the highest good of others), can be experienced.

Exceptional abilities and powers of perception are natural when all limitations are renounced or transcended.

Commentary

Hatha Yoga Pradipika
(Light on Hatha Yoga)

Continued from last issue:
Chapter Four

40. Some people, confused by various scriptures, are bewildered, not knowing how to be liberated.

Depending on the emphasis of the writer or the context or style in which information is given, the reader may not know what to believe or how to practice. One writer may assert that a personal guru-disciple relationship is needed; another may say that the true guru is within each person. Both will be correct: instruction by an embodied teacher may be needed by a truth seeker—and the true guru is one's own innate, divine intelligence. One author may emphasize devotion; another may emphasize discernment, selfless service, or meditation. An author may not be knowledgeable or may have knowledge but be unable to explain what is known; or a translation of a text may be faulty. If one's guru is insightful, reliable guidance will be given. If a devotee does not have a guru or the guru is not available, one will have to use keen powers of discernment (and common sense)—which is recommended even if one does have a teacher.

41. The mind steady, the eyes partly open, the gaze fixed at the origin of the nose, the [actions of the] moon and sun suspended, devoid of [mental or physical] movement, one perceives the light which is endless, radiant, complete—the Supreme. What more can be said?

Concentration is focused on the meditation ideal. The eyes can be partly open or they can be closed. As the meditator gazes into the spiritual eye center between the eyebrows, the influences of the left and right prana channels in the spine subside as prana flows in the central pathway (sushumna, the radiant path).

One may then perceive a clear light in the spiritual eye and/or crown chakra. The light that is perceived is either produced in the brain when prana is focused there or is spontaneously present when the mind is calm.

42. Worship the [Shiva] lingam neither by day nor by night. Blocking the day and night, the lingam should always be worshipped.

A Shiva lingam (sign or indication) used for ritual or to install on an altar or in a temple is an ellipsoid shaped object of stone, or another substance, that symbolizes Consciousness which is neither manifest nor unmanifest. Advanced meditators consider pure consciousness to be the most useful object of attention. In this verse, the author used the word lingam to indicate pure consciousness. It is to be contemplated (and can be more easily apprehended) when day and night (the lunar and solar prana influences) are "blocked" (stopped) by the flow of prana in the sushumna channel. Yogis say that meditation practiced at dawn, midday, dusk, and midnight is useful because at these times prana is naturally inclined to flow in the central pathway in the spine, air flows evenly through both nostrils, and the mind is calm.

43. When prana in the right and left nadis moves in sushumna, that is the [ideal] condition for khechari mudra.

In this verse, the term khechari mudra is used to refer to experiencing pure consciousness, which is easier when flows of prana in the right and left channels are weak and a flow of prana in the sushumna is dominant.

44. The fire [of shakti] being swallowed [restrained] midway between ida and pingala [in the sushumna] is in truth the ideal condition for khechari mudra [experiencing pure consciousness].
45. The middle of the sun and moon is the "unsupported," in which is the place of the void. This is called khechari.

The middle of the solar and lunar channels is the radiant path which requires no support. When prana flows through it to the crown chakra, awareness transcends mental states. The practice of kriya pranayama causes prana to flow through sushumna upward to the brain.

46. The flow of vital essence to the crown chakra is the beloved of Shiva. The opening of the sushumna should be filled from behind.

It is said that when shakti (kundalini energy) ascends to the crown chakra, a subtle essence of energy-consciousness sometimes referred to as "the nectar of the gods" begins to circulate in the body which strengthens the immune system and vitalizes all of the systems. When meditating, some yogis place the tongue back toward the throat to contain the life forces in the brain. Doing this is said to lower blood pressure, slow the rate of breathing, and calm the wavelike actions of the mind. At times, when attention is internalized and prana is stable in the brain, one may experience various "tastes" in the throat: which may be sweet, salty, sour, pungent, or bitter in accord with which lower chakra influence may be present. The tastes are the element characteristics of the chakras: base chakra, earth; second chakra, water; third chakra, fire; fourth chakra, air; fifth chakra, ether (space). Saliva in the mouth and throat may be thick, slimy, or thin. The "taste" experienced when secretions from the higher brain are flowing is known to those who experience it.

47. The sushumna being completely filled at the rear [upper palate] is also khechari. This practice is followed by the state of consciousness devoid of mind [thoughts and other mental processes].

Reference to this practice as "also" khechari contrasts the physical placement of the tongue toward the throat with the experience of pure consciousness which can occur without the physical act mentioned here.

48. In the middle of the eyebrows is the place of Shiva; there the mind is quiescent. This state is known as turiya [the fourth state] which is samadhi [transcendent superconsciousness] beyond time.

The three ordinary (common) states of consciousness are sleep, dreaming, and being awake with thoughts and emotions modifying the mind. The fourth state is superconsciousness. When it is pure (not mixed with ordinary states of awareness), samadhi (oneness) is realized. Perceptions of otherness and of time cease. Samadhi supported by an object of meditative contemplation (light, sound, awareness of space, joy) is preliminary and temporary. One may experience it and return to ordinary awareness or may go beyond it to the pure, nondual superconscious state. By repeated practice of samadhi (which is what is actually meant by "practice of yoga"), the mind is purified and awareness is clarified. One can then be Self- and God-realized at all times whether meditating or not.

49. Khechari should be practiced until yoga-nidra [yogic sleep] occurs. Time is then no longer perceived.

As when asleep we are oblivious of objective circumstances, so when absolute samadhi is experienced there is no awareness of things or thoughts. Meditative absorption of attention and awareness in pure consciousness should be sustained until a transcendental state of superconsciousness is realized. (Remember that the author of this text uses the word khechari as a synonym for pure consciousness.)

50. When the mind is without support, one's perception is that of being free in space.

Recent studies by neurologists indicate that when a person meditates until mental and emotional calm prevails, brain centers that ordinarily enable one to relate to the body and external circumstances are quieted. Boundaries then cease to be perceived.

Boundlessness, oneness, or endlessness is then directly experienced. The mind is usually supported by sensory input, active thinking, and subliminal forces that arise from the unconscious. When sensory input is blocked (by internalizing attention), thinking ceases, subliminal forces (vasanas) are pacified, the mind is no longer supported, and awareness is liberated from the senses and the mind. Many people mistakenly presume their thoughts and feelings to be what they are. They do not know they are units of pure consciousness identified with their thoughts, feelings, and physical states—or that they can be aware of existing without the support of thoughts, feelings, and sensations.

51. When breathing ceases, prana movements in sushumna also cease. Awareness is then established in the crown chakra.
52. Regular practice culminates in this state.

Breathlessness is not a goal toward which to strive. Breathing may be barely evident, yet one may be unconscious. During meditation practice, when attention and life force are stable in the crown chakra, breathing may be minimal or it may at times temporarily cease.

53. The body becomes filled with nectar. One then has superior health and extreme courage.

The body is vitalized by consciousness-energy. Anchored in Self- and God-knowledge, one is able to courageously relate to circumstances. The various exceptional abilities and powers of perception that may spontaneously unfold are described in the third chapter of Patanjali's *yoga-sutras*.

54. When attention and kundalini are merged in the crown chakra, mind and awareness reflect the reality of pure consciousness.

> When awareness is clarified, the reality of the true Self is revealed. Direct perception of truth is then realized.
>
> – Patanjali's *yoga-sutras 1:47,48*

55. Having merged awareness with pure consciousness, remain without thought.
56. Inside and outside is void, like an empty vessel in space, inside and outside full of space.
57. Abide in that thought-free state.

The void is the absence of attributes of consciousness, yet is experienced as fullness. It is then realized that nothing is needed to support Self-awareness. When this clear, thought-free state is realized, the meditator is advised to remain poised in it by being alert and attentive. If subliminal drives cause subtle thoughts to arise, they should be ignored. Likewise, any subjective perception other than pure consciousness should be ignored.

58. The universe floats in Cosmic Mind. Peace is experienced by going beyond the mind.

Peace, the absence of discord or conflict, prevails when mental processes are transcended. At the level of being, we are always peaceful. Disorder can only exist at the surface of our awareness. By calming the mind and remaining alert, the peace of pure existence-being is experienced. When we are firmly established in Self-awareness, superficial thoughts or feelings and external events cannot disturb our soul peace.

59. As a substance dissolves in fire and salt dissolves in water, in samadhi mental states dissolve in pure consciousness.

During preliminary stages of meditation, attention concentrated on an object (mantra, light, sound, or an ideal one aspires to actualize) is removed from thought processes. When superconsciousness prevails, subtle thoughts impelled by the actions of subliminal drives are dissolved. After a meditative samadhi experience, thoughts and other mental processes can be viewed with dispassionate objectivity.

60. All that can be known, and is known [presently perceived], supports the mind. When knowledge and that which is known is absent, there is no awareness of duality.
61. Perceived objective phenomena is reflected in the mind. With transcendence, perceptions of duality cease.

During absolute (pure) transcendence, neither awareness nor knowledge of objective realities are present.

62. As objects of knowledge are abandoned, awareness is absorbed into pure consciousness. When awareness is thus absorbed, the state of kaivalya (aloneness) prevails.

The "aloneness" is vivid realization of absolute existence-being which requires no support of an object of perception.

63. Thus are the various means to accomplishment of samadhi as described by mahatmas (great seers) according to their experience.

The instruction of Self-realized teachers is valid and truth-revealing because they have experienced what they teach. In the first chapter of his *yoga-sutras*, Patanjali (who compiled and restated the teachings of saints and sages who preceded him) described the several ways to accomplish Self- and God-realization. In chapter one, verses two to three, he described yoga (samadhi, oneness) as that absolute state that results when the wavelike movements in mind and awareness cease. The means by which this is accomplished are discernment of the difference between one's true nature and ordinary states of awareness; pranayama that results in mental calmness and stopping the influences of subliminal forces; meditative contemplation on Om; and devotion to God.

64. Salutations to sushumna, kundalini, the nectar flowing from the crown chakra, the clear and thought-free state of mind, the energy of kundalini, and pure consciousness.

65. I will describe concentration on sound which can be done by even the unlearned who are unable to comprehend the supreme reality.

Although meditating on Om is a recommended practice for advanced meditators, it is suitable for all devotees regardless of their present state of understanding.

66. There are many ways to realize samadhi; we think the direct way is to explore inner sound.

In our kriya yoga tradition, after preliminary meditation techniques have been used for their intended purposes, the final stage of practice is listening to Om.

67. Sitting in a comfortable meditation posture, gazing into the spiritual eye, the yogi should listen with alert attention in the right ear.

Perhaps it was recommended that listening be done in the right ear because of the presumption that most meditators would be right-handed. Since subtle sounds may manifest in either ear or within one's awareness, it is best to experiment. In some unenlightened yogic traditions in which superstition still prevails, well-meaning teachers say that listening in the right ear attracts positive influences; listening in the left ear attracts negative forces. Rather than be concerned with irrational ideas, we should aspire to awaken to Self- and God-realization.

68. With eyes, ears, nose, and mouth closed, a clear, distinct sound is heard in the purified sushumna.

One can actually close the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth with the fingers of the hands when practicing jyoti mudra prior to a more extended duration of listening to inner sound.

69. The four stages of practice for the accomplishment of samadhi are: the beginning; awareness within the body; progressive increase of progress; consummation.

70. The door of God being pierced, a feeling of bliss arises from the void; wondrous tinkling sounds and the "unstruck" sound emanated from the dorsal chakra are heard within the body.

The "door of God" is sushumna. Various emanated sounds of the element frequencies of the chakras may then be heard.

71. When the yogi experiences bliss in the void of the heart, the body becomes lustrous and diseaseless.

When the meditator is established in superconsciousness, regenerative influences pervade the mind and body.

72. In the second stage, shakti goes into the middle nadi. Firm in the meditation posture, the yogi is comparable to a divine being.

Since prana is already moving in sushumna, it is believed that the original author of the text described life force moving deeper into the finer channels within the sushumna.

73. When the dorsal chakra knot is pierced, the greatest bliss is revealed.

When awareness is established at the heart chakra, the illusional sense of selfhood is transcended. Actual experience of one's true nature as a spiritual being prevails.

74. The third stage is that of the great void, and one enters into the place of total perfection.

Fifth chakra awareness is cosmic consciousness. From this stage one awakens to God-realization.

75. The bliss of pure consciousness realized, spontaneous ecstasy is experienced. Imbalance of the doshas, pain, old age, disease, hunger, and sleep are overcome.

Doshas, the three cosmic principles that regulate physical and psychological processes, are inclined to be balanced when

superconsciousness is realized. When balance is maintained and Self-realization is stable, debilitating conditions common to people whose awareness is ordinary tend to be corrected.

76. When the ajna chakra [spiritual eye center] is pierced, the fire of prana moves to the crown chakra.
77. This [practice] is called raja [supreme] yoga. The yogi abides in the samadhi of God-realization.

Kundalini shakti (energy) having ascended to the crown chakra, absolute (pure) existence-being is realized. This is the supreme or ultimate yoga (oneness) realization.

78. Whether or not one is then liberated, there is bliss as the result of absorption in Om.

Even if liberation of consciousness is not complete because karma (influential subconscious conditionings and delusions) has yet to be weakened and removed, at this stage of meditative realization the joy of Self-knowledge prevails.

79. There are practitioners of hatha yoga who have no knowledge of raja yoga. These I consider as mere practitioners [of methods] because they derive no [spiritual] benefits for their efforts.

Complete hatha yoga practice culminates in samadhi. The practice of asanas and other procedures improves health and well-being.

80. In my opinion, contemplation on the spiritual eye leads quickly to the thought-free state. This practice is suitable for attaining raja yoga [supreme oneness] even for those whose intellectual powers are undeveloped. Absorption in Om gives immediate experience [of higher realities].
81. There is an abundance of bliss in the heart [essence of being] of great [accomplished] yogis who remain in samadhi absorbed in the sound current or who explore it.

Note: Verses 82 to 113 extol the benefits of meditating on Om.

114. If prana does not flow in the middle path, if concentration on the essence of being is not steadied by restraint of prana, if the mind does not reflect [the light of] spontaneous meditation, those who speak of spiritual knowledge are only indulging in idle talk [and imparting inaccurate information].

In this verse, the necessity of having personal experience and realization is emphasized. Without this, one who attempts to teach yoga will only be talking about superficial matters.

This concludes our examination of the text of
Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Light on Hatha Yoga

Note:

Real practice of yoga is practice of samadhi. Until Self- and God-realization are permanent. The teachings and practices of our kriya yoga tradition provide knowledge of Consciousness and its processes and the practical means by which a sincere devotee can experience rapid, authentic spiritual growth.

To supplement your studies, read Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* in *Life Surrendered in God*, *The Path of Light*, or *A Guide to Kriya Yoga Practice* and *The Eternal Way* (Bhagavad Gita).

When, by means of inference, the true nature of the universe and the relationship between it and the essence of being is understood, and when it is understood that delusion alone causes souls to forget their true Self and to experience suffering, one naturally wishes to be relieved from all misfortune. Thus liberation from the bondage of delusion becomes the primary aim of life.

– Swami Sri Yukteswar

News

It is not too early to plan a private retreat here next May. See the facing page for details and let us know when your plans are firm. See the back cover for schedules of meditation seminars in several U.S. cities and Germany. Note the places where kriya initiation will be offered.

If you are reading this issue of *Radiance* in early October and want to view an India-based website which is letting their clients and browsers know about my lectures there, log on to the Internet and go to:

www.indiayogi.com

Look in the news events listings. A report on the October visit will be published in the winter issue of *Truth Journal.*

Note to *Radiance* readers in India: my book *The Eternal Way: The Inner Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita*, was published by Motilal Banarsidass in July and is available at their stores in Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai, Pune, Patna, and Varanasi. If you do not live in these cities, ask your local bookseller to order it from the publisher for you.

Nothing separates us from God. It is only the habit of identifying with mental and physical states and objective phenomena that causes and sustains the illusion of independent existence.

Private Retreats At CSA Headquarters
For CSA Members and Kriya Initiates

Spring 2002 Schedule
May 5 - 10 • May 12 - 17 • May 19 - 24

Limited to 20 participants.
Stay for one, two, or three weeks.

Arrive Saturday or Sunday.
Private, Comfortable Guest House Rooms Provided
Prepare Your Own Vegetarian Meals

- One Hour Meditation at 6 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Class on kriya yoga philosophy and practices at 7 a.m.
- Two hours of light work-service daily.
- Free time for rest, private study, and quiet reflection.
- Donation basis.
- Reservations required.
- Request travel directions if needed.

Center for Spiritual Awareness
P.O. Box 7 Lakemont, GA 30552
Telephone (706) 782-4723 weekdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Fax (706) 782-4560 anytime E-mail csainc@csa-davis.org
Internet web site www.csa-davis.org

Regular summer retreat schedules open to everyone are published in *Truth Journal* and our newsletter.

Meditation Seminars 2002

Kriya initiation will be offered to CSA members and other prepared applicants at these (*) locations. Kriya initiates are invited to attend for review and to renew their commitment to practice. Tell your friends. Donation basis. Reservations requested.

*SOUTH FLORIDA
To be announced.

ARIZONA
Phoenix (Peoria): Wednesday, March 13, 7 p.m.
Sponsored by Center for Spiritual Unfoldment.
Location: To be announced.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
*Costa Mesa: Sunday, March 17, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Holiday Inn, 3131 South Bristol Street, off 405 Freeway. One mile west of the Orange County Airport. Initiation at 3:30 p.m.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
Redding: Thursday, March 21, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Redding Church of Religious Science.
1905 Hartnell Avenue.

*San Jose: Saturday, March 23, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Center for Spiritual Enlightenment, 1146 University Avenue.
Initiation at 4 p.m.

GERMANY
*Munich: April 6,7. All day Saturday; Sunday until noon. English, with German translation. CSA members and friends in all European countries are invited. Contact: Harald and Marlies Reiske, Görlitzer Str. 14, 94036 Passau. Telephone (0851) 54283.
E-mail: reiske@kriya-yoga.de
Website: www.kriya-yoga.de